ABORTION — Part 2

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New Statesman

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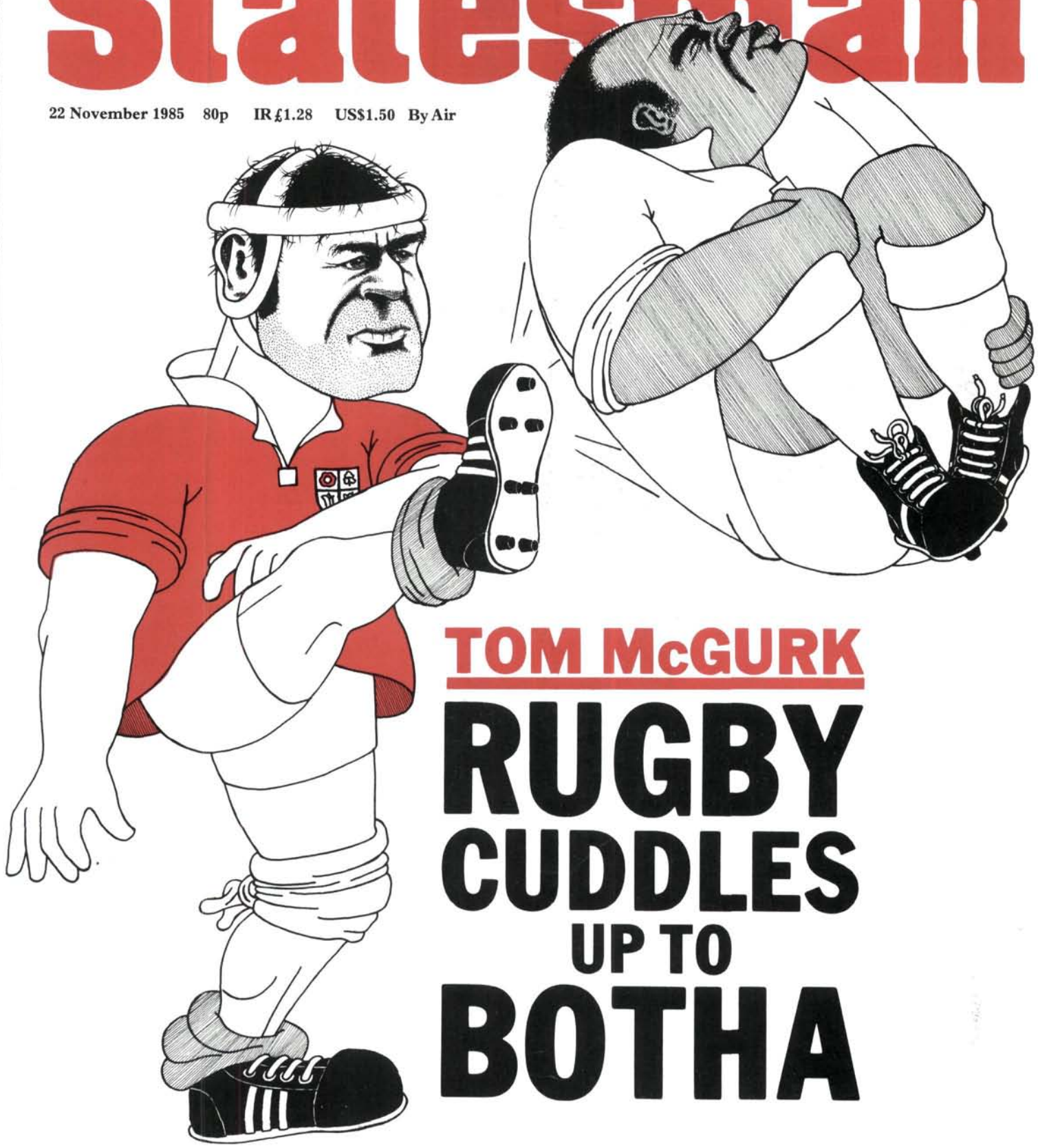

TOM McGURK

RUGBY CUDDLES UP TO BOTHA

FIONNUALA O CONNOR: **Anglo-Irish deal—the sales effort**

CHARLES FOX: **A Soviet kind of jazz**

MARY MIDGLEY: **Cultists of evolution**

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In the right hands, one of these could save your life.

Deep in the almost impenetrable rain forests of the Amazon, where only the most intrepid explorer dares to tread, there grows a vine called *Chondrodendron tomentosum*.

From this, the South American Indian tribes have for centuries produced a deadly arrow poison which we know as curare.

It was noted as long ago as 1541 when the Spanish explorer, Francisco de Orellana, lost a companion after an Indian shot him with a curare-tipped arrow. "The arrow did not penetrate half a finger, but, as it had poison on it, he gave up his soul to our Lord."

Luckily for most explorers, the main purpose for which the Indians chose their poison was for hunting animals. When "injected" by a curare-tipped arrow, their prey could still be eaten quite safely since the poison is not effective when taken by mouth.

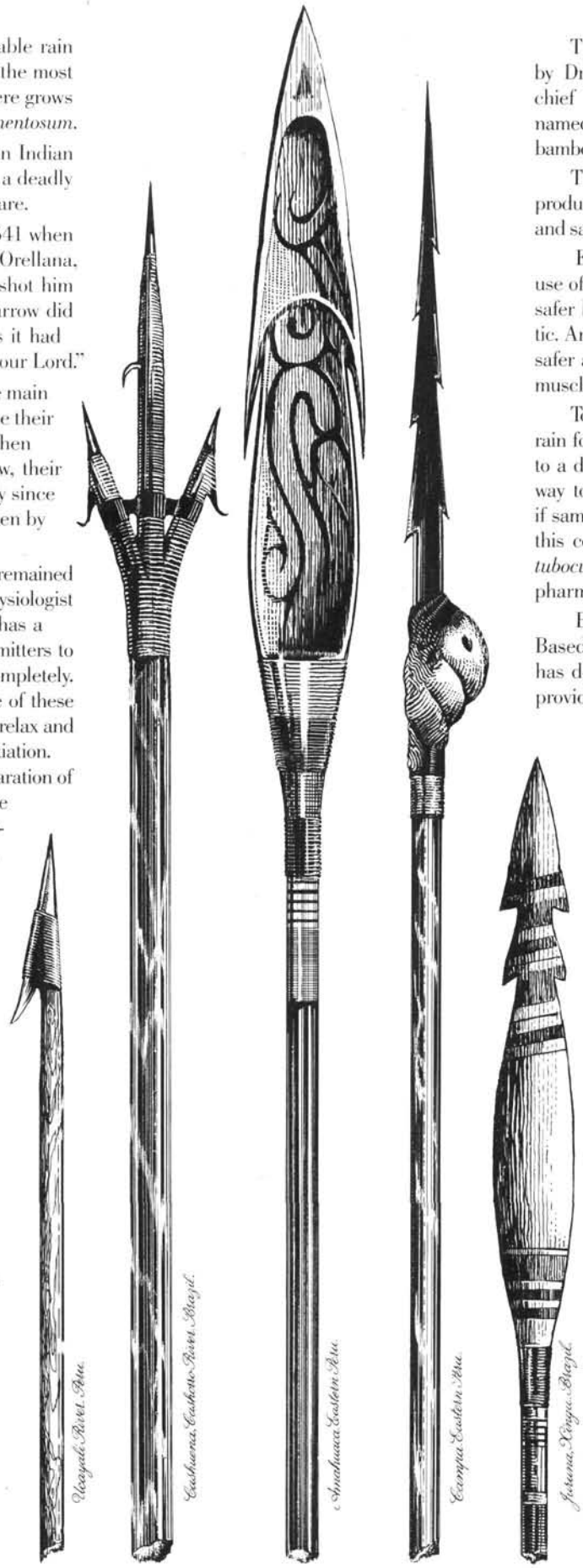
Exactly how this poison works remained a mystery until 1842, when the physiologist Claude Bernard discovered that it has a blocking action on the neuro-transmitters to the muscles, which then relax completely. For the unfortunate recipient of one of these arrows, the respiratory muscles also relax and death soon occurs through asphyxiation.

The secret process for the preparation of curare was not recorded in accurate detail until 1912, when Charles Waterton, a somewhat eccentric naturalist, set out with the avowed intention of obtaining a sample of this deadly poison.

He described how the Indians made curare and noted the inclusion of ants and two snakes, although it was obvious that the main ingredient was a vine.

He also reported an ingenious method of rating its potency. If a monkey hit by a poisoned dart was able to jump no further than the next tree before falling dead, it was "one-tree curare" and a very good brew. If the monkey made it as far as two or even three trees, then it was given the lower rating of "two" or "three-tree curare." (Much to the monkeys' relief, modern chemical methods of assaying curare are far more precise.)

It was not until the completion of experiments conducted by Waterton that curare was seriously considered for medical use.



This was finally made possible in 1935 by Dr. Harold King, when he isolated the chief paralysing ingredient of curare. He named it *tubocurarine* after the traditional bamboo tube which the poison was packed in.

This "chemical milestone" meant that the production of curare could be standardised and safely tested.

Eventually, this led to the revolutionary use of the drug in making anaesthesia much safer by permitting lower doses of anaesthetic. And it made abdominal surgery much safer and simpler by rendering the stomach muscles flaccid.

Today, the vine is still collected in the rain forests where the extract is boiled down to a dark, treacly resin. This then makes its way to Peru by mule and light aircraft and, if samples prove satisfactory, it is shipped to this country where the manufacture of *tubocurarine chloride* is carried out by the pharmaceutical industry.

But the industry has not stopped there. Based on experience with *tubocurarine*, it has developed some new muscle relaxants providing a comprehensive range for today's more advanced surgical techniques.

The modern-day use of these drugs in the operating theatre is the result of the combined efforts of botanists, physiologists, pharmacologists, South American Indians of yesterday, their descendants in Ecuador and Peru and, of course, the pharmaceutical industry.

It is through this kind of international co-operation that the British pharmaceutical industry is able to contribute to world health. And, in turn, to contribute to the financial health of this country.

The industry's exports in 1984 were worth over £1,200 million, giving a net balance of trade of some £680 million. (Projected exports for this year are £1,400 million.)

Were it not for the investment which this industry is able to make in research, these figures would not have been so impressive. And these arrows may never have fallen into the right hands.

If you would like to find out more about the British Pharmaceutical Industry, please write to: Dr. John Griffin, The ABPI, 12 Whitehall, London SW1A 2DY.

abpi

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry.

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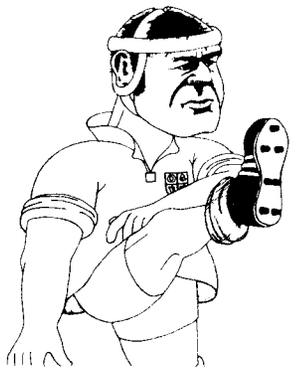
New Statesman



Cover drawing: Mark Hadden

Playing with apartheid
TOM McGURK reports on the rugby football establishment cuddling up quietly to Botha; NORMAN LEWIS on the British legal establishment's helpful connivance 10

HOME

Andrew Roth: Private members' bills 8
Peter Kellner: Confederation of British Futility 9
Mark Hollingsworth: *Sun* inside story shock 12
Fionnuala O Connor: Selling the Anglo-Irish deal 13
Julia South: Facing up to arguments over abortion — Part II 14

FOREIGN

Jack Mendelsohn: Eyes down on your Geneva score-card 18
Scott MacLeod: Arafat adds a twig to the olive branch 19
David Johnston: Franco's relics 20

WEEKEND

Mary Midgley: How Darwin's theory of Evolution has been distorted by his 'disciples' 23

BOOKS

Jonathan Mirsky: China 26
Robert del Quiaro: Drugs 27
Justin Wintle: Peter Conrad's *Everyman History of English Literature* 27
Peter Norman: Poem 28
Liz Heron: Fiction 28

ARTS

Charles Fox: Jazz in the USSR 29
John Coleman: *Plenty* and other films 30
Benedict Nightingale: The National Theatre 31
Paul Allen: Olwen Wymark's new play 32

BACKCHAT

Andrew Lumsden: Talking about my generation 32
Naseem Khan: Work in progress meets Ova 33
Hugo Williams: Television 34
Weekend competition 35
Crossword 35

PLUS

Ralph Steadman 8
This England 14
Mediawatch: Mandy Merck 16
Slump 16
Diary: Ian Williams 17
Roger Woddis 17
Letters 21
John Minnion 21
Feedback: Felix Pirani 22
Janis Goodman 39
Chess: George Botterill 39
Quiz 39

NEXT WEEK

ELEMENTS OF GREATNESS
25 years after Nigeria won independence the country lurches from crisis to crisis, though gifted with all the 'elements of greatness'. ADEWALE MAJA-PEARCE broods on the continued 'warping by colonial experience'

OLD BILL/ NEW BILL
JOLYON JENKINS spends a day with police as they're trained in the new Police & Criminal Evidence Act

MR GRUNDY KILLS
Right-wing prudery about gay life and sexuality is preventing the kind of 'safe sex' advertising urgently needed to curtail the risks of Aids and to educate society as a whole. So Thatcher puts in Barney Hayhoe (left) as minister of health. ANDREW LUMSDEN goes for Grundy

CHRISTMAS BOOKS
Present possibilities: reviews of art books, show-biz autobiographies, the lives of writing women, novels, stories, etc., etc.

MUSIC
BIBA KOPF lends an ear to visiting groups from New York and Texas

New Statesman
Vol 110 No 2852 22 November 1985

A welcome small step for Ireland

WHEN MRS THATCHER reshuffled her Cabinet in September and moved Douglas Hurd from Northern Ireland, despite the fact that the Anglo-Irish talks were at a late and critical stage, it was widely taken as evidence that she was not serious about doing a deal. But, as we said at the time, the person of the Northern Ireland Secretary has never been a decisive factor in the Ulster equation.

That decisive factor was whether or not the Tory government was prepared to call the historic Ulster Unionist bluff and assert ultimate Westminster authority in the Irish question over explicit threats that the majority in the province would seek to make it ungovernable, if London had the slightest truck with Dublin. In making *this* decision only one person mattered — the Prime Minister.

Her conversion to the idea of a London-Dublin initiative on Ulster is very recent. In so far as she had any ideas at all on the Irish question before, they were pretty much limited to being against the IRA because they were 'men of violence' and to surprise helicopter trips to visit the army in order to demonstrate personal support for 'our boys' on the spot.

So long as James Prior was still in her government but banished to Belfast, Mrs Thatcher's attitude to his persistent attempts to get an Ulster initiative off the ground ranged from indifference to suspicion that someone who might still be a potential political threat could thereby enhance his standing. Certainly her then Parliamentary Private Secretary and general factotum, Ian Gow, established a reputation for undermining Prior in his direct contacts with Ulster Protestents and, since she made no obvious attempt to restrain him, it was generally assumed that Gow represented Thatcher's view.

When Douglas Hurd succeeded Prior in Ulster, the impression was given that the province now had a Secretary of State whose personal view was that Ulster was one of those political problems to which there was no solution, at least not in this generation; that continual efforts by his predecessors to prove otherwise had proven to be an expense of spirit in a waste of shame; and that his personal priority was to conduct a low-key holding operation until he could move on to some better job. The officials of the Northern Ireland Office could not have been more relieved.

The main credit for causing the shift must go to the Irish Prime Minister, Dr FitzGerald. In the face of zero encouragement, he pursued over the years the unpromising task of seeking to persuade Mrs Thatcher to inform herself about the realities of the Irish question and to concentrate on it. Her insensitivity to the great personal political risk he was running by laying himself open to her rejection undoubtedly weakened his already weak electoral position. But he persevered and has had his (partial) reward.

Whether or not the move will do him political good at home in the long run remains questionable. His, though, was something of a personal mission to bring home both to the British government and to romantic Irish nationalists the realities of the relationship between Ulster and the Republic. For Mrs Thatcher, once she had been brought to focus on the issue, the attraction of going down in history as the Prime Minister who set Ulster off down a new and less hopeless road, combined with the prospect of

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reducing the £4 billion annual cost of the present policy of Fortress Ulster, proved decisive.

The step that is represented by the Anglo-Irish agreement is by itself small and faltering. It will only mean anything if both London and Dublin make it clear that they intend over time to take other small steps in the same direction, despite the many efforts to sabotage the process that will undoubtedly be made (see Fionnuala OConnor on p13). But any agreement that is denounced with equal vehemence by Charles Haughey in the south and Enoch Powell in the north must be facing in roughly the right direction. □

Pity the poor PM

> ... of course I only have the money which I earn to live on, I know how important it is...
>
> Mrs Thatcher, *Weekend World*, 17 November

OBVIOUSLY THE NATION'S prime concern at this time is whether or not actual tears welled in Prime Ministerial eyes when Miriam Stoppard on ITV's *Woman to Woman* interviewed Mrs Thatcher on Tuesday and our leader had to rehearse that traumatic moment in her Grantham childhood when her father was actually forced to give up his aldermanic robes. But the unashamed Party Political Broadcast on behalf of the Conservative Party conducted by Brian Walden on LWT's *Weekend World* was perhaps of greater *political* interest.

Pressed whether public spending was still really under 'overall firm control' we were treated to the following vital exchange:

PM: Still the prudent old Maggie...

Walden: Is it, well now?

PM: Oh yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes... Yes, yes, yes.

The greater illusion, though, was contained in her unforced assertion that she knows what life is really like, because she has always had to 'live on her income' — what the majority is supposed to be doing is unclear. In reality she did what all aspiring Tory politicians long to do — namely marry a millionaire.

Thirty-four years ago, after just over three years as a very run-of-the-mill research chemist, prudent young Maggie married our Denis, who had come into the big money not as a self-made entrepreneur but because he was born into a family that owned a paint firm in Dartford, of which he became managing director, which had for him the good fortune to be bought by Castrol, which in turn had its (and his) shares bought out by Burmah Oil.

So, next time prudent old Maggie pretends she knows what it's like to be short of the ready, just reflect that she has not had a moment's actual worry about money since the age of 26. □

THIRD WORLD COMMUNICATIONS

MANAGING EDITOR

A Managing Editor is required for Third World Communications (TWC), publishers of Third World Book Review. TWC is an exciting new venture aimed at promoting Third World writers and publishers and developing a Third World information network. Applicants for this post should have a knowledge of and commitment to the Third World. He or she should have proven journalistic experience at a senior level and should feel comfortable in academic circles. The successful applicant will have overall responsibility for the production of TWC publications, including commissioning articles, liaising with contributors, sub-editing and writing.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

TWC is also seeking an efficient, enthusiastic Editorial Assistant. His or her responsibilities will include day-to-day running of the office, general secretarial duties, proof reading and liaising with the typesetter and printer. A knowledge of Third World affairs, although not essential, is preferable.

ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER

TWC is also looking for an Advertisement Manager for Third World Book Review and Third World Women's News. Applicants for the post should have experience and a knowledge of and interest in the Third World is desirable.

January 1, 1986 is the starting date for all positions. Conditions of service are negotiable. Please send full curriculum vitae to The Publisher, Kwame Nkrumah House, 173 Old Street, London EC1V 9NJ.

Closing date: 30 December 1985.

'That was to this, as Hyperion to a satyr'

HAMLET MIGHT have been ruminating about judges. In the last few days we have had Judge Michael Argyle, the *satyr* in this analogy, sentencing a man to life imprisonment for — and we are being precise — waving his fist in a menacing fashion and lashing out with his feet. Anne Sofer cried out about it in *The Times* and we here (*NS* 15 November). And on the other hand, the *Hyperion* of the occasion, we have had Sir James Miskin, the Recorder of London, giving up to seven years to convicted gang rapists and saying that the bench 'must express society's horror of the mounting volume of man's inhumanity to women'.

Without over extolling the Recorder, it must be right to mark a historic moment and to draw attention to it. Miskin's language was the language of women's anger, of the anger of relatives of abused women, and not to put too fine a point on it, of women's liberation. He might have imposed the *same* sentences (they are in the range ratified by the Court of Appeal though in practice the average is three to five years, less than many a man might expect for burglary or fraud) and yet fulminated in patriarchal style about 'law 'n order'. And for once, rather than telling us, or leaving us to infer, that for class reasons or racist ones — protection of 'our' white women from 'you' Blacks — there must be exemplary punishment, he accompanied his attack on male violence with one on the racist abuse the black defendants had received.

The chaos of our Constitution is nowhere more vividly illustrated than in the absence of any clear understanding, shared across the Bench and inculcated in its recruitment and its occupational *ethos*, of who the judges are supposed to be keeping faith with. Argyle's life sentence bore all the marks, for it captured banner headlines, of a deliberate shot in the arm for this government's version of a law and order policy. (Nor does it seem coincidental that the fan he made an example of was one of the few brought before the courts for football violence who was black.) For only two years ago the same judge Argyle imposed a maximum of *a year's* imprisonment on men involved in football violence that resulted in a death. Two years ago Thatcher had not turned her eye on 'the problem of football'.

Miskin by contrast had heard, and showed in his judgment that he had understood, voices which are not from the Cabinet. The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, *vide* Cheltenham GCHQ judgment, has not got as far. Nor we can be sure have the majority of the Recorder of London's colleagues on the bench when it comes to the general judicial attitude to men convicted of rape. Guidelines issued by Lord Lane himself in 1980 are not, *The Times* reported this Wednesday, being followed: jail terms for rape are diminishing, while the incidence of rape cases heard by the Old Bailey has increased by 150 per cent in the last 11 years. But then Thatcher and Hurd have not been putting the well-being of women at the top of the Conservative agenda. □

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RE-CHEM INTERNATIONAL CALLS IN LAWYERS TO QUELL ITS OPPONENTS

THE TOXIC WASTE disposal company, Re-Chem International, has decided to get tough with its critics by taking or threatening legal action against them. In recent months the company's lawyers have issued a writ for libel against the BBC, fired off a series of menacing letters to environmental groups and won an out-of-court settlement from a Scottish newspaper. ROB EDWARDS reports

The Scotsman

Re-Chem's Bonnybridge plant, now closed — to the satisfaction of local farmer Andrew Graham

RE-CHEM currently operates two disposal plants, one in Pontypool in South Wales and another near Southampton. Last year the company decided to close its plant at Bonnybridge in Scotland, allegedly because of financial problems. There has long been an intense controversy over the possible health effects of chemical pollutants which may have come from the Welsh and Scottish plants (*NS* 7 & 21 September and 3 August 1984).

Re-Chem is suing the BBC for damages primarily because of criticisms made on television during a *Newsnight* investigative feature in May. Also mentioned in the action are items put out by BBC television in Wales, BBC Radio Gwent and the religious TV documentary, *Heart of the Matter*. The BBC's lawyers have lodged a defence against the writ, which is not likely to come to court for at least several months.

In August Re-Chem's London solicitors, Nabarro Nathanson, wrote to both Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (Scotland) threatening to sue for libel unless various allegations broadcast on radio were withdrawn. Greenpeace director Pete Wilkinson was asked to withdraw remarks he made on a Radio Four phone-in programme on 13 August. He has refused to do so, and Re-Chem is now considering its position.

FoE (Scotland)'s co-ordinator Andy Kerr was accused of being 'grossly irresponsible and malicious' and of making 'clearly untrue and defamatory' accusations about the way in which the Bonnybridge plant was run. He made the offending remarks on a programme broadcast in June by BBC Radio Scotland, which has also heard from Nabarro Nathanson. Discussions are proceeding between FoE (Scotland), which has strongly defended its allegations, and the BBC's Scottish lawyers, who have indicated a willingness to retract.

'Unfair contest'

According to Andy Kerr, it is a classic case of David and Goliath: 'I think most people would regard it as unfair that such a large organisation should pick on such a small organisation funded by public donations.' FoE (Scotland) employs two and a half staff and had a turnover of £18,000 last year.

In the summer Re-Chem won nearly £10,000 in damages from the Scottish *Sunday Mail* over accusations made by a scientist, Dr Larry Robertson, published last August. The newspaper was also obliged to publish a correction.

A spokesperson for Re-Chem denied that it was trying to silence criticism by strong-arm legal tactics. He stressed the company's right to protect its reputation against gross defamation.

Mr Len Pearce, the solicitor from Nabarro Nathanson acting for Re-Chem, took a slightly different line. As well as the writ against the BBC there were 'several other complaints in the pipeline', he told the *New Statesman*. 'I would get anything you write checked out by Re-Chem first.'

'It is a very delicate situation at the moment,' he says: 'The best advice I can give you is to keep off the Re-Chem subject. They're getting very very touchy and they've had enough.'

Slow death in Zia's prison

LABOUR MPs Bob Parry, Ron Brown, Bob Litherland and Ernie Roberts have asked to meet the Pakistani ambassador to protest at the continued imprisonment of opposition politician Rasool Baksh Palejo.

Palejo, leader of the Pakistan People's Movement comes from Sind — Bhutto's province. He was sentenced to a year's hard labour in October 1979 for 'making objectionable speeches and raising slogans at illegally convened meetings'. But at the end of the term he continued to be held under martial law regulation 78 which permits the authorities to hold people without trial and without informing them of the grounds for their detention.

Palejo is seriously ill from an undiagnosed disease, which has led to his case being taken up by Amnesty International. After allowing his health to deteriorate to an alarming extent, the authorities were forced to call in doctors who were, however, unable to cure him. In June a medical board established by the Sind provincial government recommended that he should be given temporary leave to go abroad for treatment. A bed was put by for him at the Hammersmith hospital, but he never arrived to fill it.

The case shows that the Punjabi military rulers are still unprepared to tolerate any resistance in Sind, where feeling continue to run high after Bhutto's execution.

Supporters of Palejo plan to demonstrate outside the Pakistan embassy on 10 December.

Mohsin A. Bangash

Min of Ag on the loose with Geiger counters

FARMS near nuclear power stations in England and Wales are being approached by the Ministry of Agriculture to help with a monitoring programme on the radioactivity of farm products from the start of next year.

A brief indication of the programme was made in the back of the November issue of British Farmer, *the National Farmers' Union (NFU) publication. So far only the NFU has been approached by the ministry, and there has been no official public announcement.*

The NFU was asked in October to assist in the project. Milk will be sampled monthly and all types of crops produced in the immediate vicinity of nuclear stations will be tested on a seasonal basis.

Farmers will be approached by the ministry before any information is made available to the public. The results will be published annually, but won't be available until the end of next year.

The ministry says that the tests were planned 'in view of the growing public interest and concern by farmers over the effect of radioactivity on food products.' The programme, it says, will be a 'fully independent affair', carried out by its own officers and research staff.

Sue Elvidge from Greenpeace tells the New Statesman: *'We're glad that the ministry is at last planning to monitor farms in nuclear regions properly, but the project is wildly behind the times and should have started a long time ago.'*

Farmers for a Nuclear Free Future (FNFF), set up three years ago in response to the radioactive milk at farms near Sellafield, Cumbria, say they are relieved that the ministry is facing the facts. Peter Ffitch from the FNFF, says: 'The ministry has finally been forced to face the environmental hazards caused by nuclear stations.'

The NFU has indicated that it thinks is in the interests of the farming industry that the tests are carried out efficiently. The union has no general policy over nuclear waste and dumping.

Angus Finney

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Peace Protests Roll Call (21)

Total arrested in UK and Eire since September 1981: 9,659

Arrests to date by location

Bristol 9
6.8.85 9 arrested and charged with criminal damage for shadow painting with washable paint on Hiroshima Day. Found guilty at Bristol magistrates' court on 30 October. Each given one year conditional discharges and ordered to pay costs of £24 each. They are planning an appeal.

London, CND Rally 4
26.10.85 4 arrested and charged, two of them for handing out leaflets (about Snowball) 'likely to incite criminal behaviour'.

Bawburgh RAF Base 7
20-23.9.85 7 arrested on National Snowball.

RAF Newton 2
30.6.85 2 arrested after a trespass. Charged with obstruction of a policewoman.

RAF Corsham, Wiltshire 6
20-23.9.85 6 arrested on National Snowball. (Charges have since been dropped.)

Alconbury USAF Base, Cambridgeshire 3
29.9.85 3 arrested after cutting fence. Charge confused with Molesworth Military Lands Byelaws — initially charged with a 'mix'n'match' charge so beloved of the MoD when they don't know what they are doing: thus 'Interfering with the Fence' became eventually plain boring old 'criminal trespass'. Two were fined £25 and one £30.

RAF Bentwaters, Nr. Woodbridge, Suffolk 4
20-23.9.85 4 arrested on National Snowball. All four are expecting a summons through the post.

RAF Coltishall 2
20-23.9.85 2 arrested on National Snowball.

West Raynham, Norfolk 3
20-23.9.85 3 arrested on National Snowball.

Oxford 9
6.8.85 9 people arrested in city centre shadow painting.

Boston, Lincs 6
6.8.85 6 people arrested Shadow Painting.

Aldermaston Atomic Bomb Research Establishment, 3
3 women from Greenham charged with criminal damage at Aldermaston will elect to go to Crown Court when they appear at Reading magistrates on 25 November.

ROF Burghfield 9
9 Greenham women arrested and charged with criminal damage whose cases went before the DPP for possible prosecution under the Official Secrets Act had all charges against them dropped just after the 'Cyprus Spy' defendants were found not guilty.

Andover — Cruisewatchers
30.4.85 Cruisewatch protestors stopped a US military convoy and painted the windscreens of one of the vehicles to prevent it moving on. The driver had to smash his windscreen after trying to clear the paint away with his windscreen wipers, which of course only served to act as paint rollers. The entire convoy of 15 vehicles was halted for several minutes. This was denied by the MoD but Cruisewatchers recorded the entire incident on video. Two men who admitted causing criminal damage to the convoy were not charged. One of them, Ian Lee, was recently (6 months after the event) told that he was only being cautioned even though he had told police that he would do the same thing again! He says: 'The only motive can be a political instruction to police to minimise public knowledge of the true situation with Cruise convoys and to avoid political embarrassment'. Due to the enormous success of the combined efforts of Cruisewatchers and Greenham women a full convoy has been unable to leave Greenham airbase for nearly four months now and can only leave in dribbles and drabbles in the early hours of morning. They are always tracked by Cruisewatchers to their destination. It's estimated that the Cruise convoy costs around £750,000 a year, or £60,000 per convoy to police.

Greenham Common
13.11.85 Anne Ingold from Orange Gate was sentenced to 7 days in Holloway for non-payment of a £15 fine. 1

● Greenham women were delighted to see a well known gremlin join them in the Newbury Dole Queue . . . no, it wasn't Anthony Meyer — he's self employed . . . it was no other than Baldy-the-barbarous-bailiff — not known for his clemency during evictions . . .

Please send new information to **Janey Hulme** *at the* New Statesman

US TURNS PROPAGANDA BEAM ON BRITAIN

BRITAIN looks likely to get a new radio station — run by the American government. The Voice Of America, which mingles straightforward news and entertainment with sympathetic explanation of US policy, is aiming at Western Europe for the first time in 30 years. CHRIS BENFIELD reports

UNTIL NOW, the VOA has gone mainly to countries in the Third World and to Eastern Europe. During October, the station's Washington-financed all-day output became available, via a new satellite link, on this side of the Iron Curtain.

The service is free. All any station needs to pick it up and cable or beam it out is a simple dish receiver, for which the VOA will help to pay. VOA is also trying to negotiate its own frequencies for wireless transmission.

The station's light entertainment programmes might interest some commercial radio stations, although they would need IBA approval to take them. And they would almost certainly be expected by VOA to take some 'editorials' along with the pop and comedy.

There are still a few spare frequencies available for which VOA could apply for a licence to transmit from within Britain. But other applications, including one from Radio Luxembourg, have been refused.

However, the Home Office tells the *NS* that the government would be likely to take a tolerant view if VOA simply beefed up a signal put out on the continent so that it reached us too. According to a spokesperson: 'Subject to practical considerations, this government's attitude tends to be "Let nation speak unto nation".'

The VOA's 'editorials', which take up an average of two minutes an hour, are prepared by journalists who work without direct censorship but with US Government 'guidance'.

Frank Scott, VOA's European director says: 'The VOA went on air in 1942 and stopped transmitting to Western Europe in the 50s. It's long been felt that dropping Western Europe, along with other places like Japan and Australia, was a mistake. During the Carter years, getting re-established over here was approved but never funded. Now, with President Reagan's approval, the funding has suddenly come through.'

Another senior VOA man commented: 'Reagan is a media man. He knows this is a small investment for a big return in understanding of American policy.' ●

Armagh's grim anniversary

THIS MONTH sees the third anniversary of the introduction of strip-searching in Armagh women's prison, Northern Ireland. To mark the occasion three relatives of Armagh prisoners gave a press conference at the House of Commons on Monday.

The women prisoners are made to stand naked, rotate slowly, lift their hair and their feet and bend over for a 'visual' examination. Jacqueline Moore, pregnant when arrested, suffered this treatment into the sixth month of pregnancy, and it started again five weeks after she gave birth. Her baby and its clothes have also been searched. Another woman has been searched 228 times. The strip-searching only happens to unconvicted remand prisoners. Margaret McClenaghan told how her sister spent eight years in Armagh without once being strip-searched only to be stripped for the first time on the day of her release.

Only women are subjected to the practice, carried out in the name of 'security'. Yet after three years the only 'discoveries' have been a £5 note, a small bottle of perfume and some aspirins. It seems likely that the practice is intended as systematic sexual harassment.

Terry O'Halloran

More bad news for Fowler

RESEARCH by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) demonstrates an extraordinary breadth of opposition to Norman Fowler's Green Paper on social security reform. CPAG has tabulated the written responses to Fowler's proposals from some 60 groups, including employer's organisations, professional associations, quangos, and trade unions.

On some of the proposals many organisations had no opinion. But none of the other proposals got support from more than three organisations.

The only organisation that consistently backed Fowler was the Monday Club. The next most loyal group was the Institute of Directors, though even it only approved of five of the 21 tabulated proposals. The CBI approved of nothing and the proposal to operate the 'Social Fund' on the basis of repayable loans had the distinction of being supported by nobody.

There was limited support for a few minor measures. 18 groups approved of increased flexibility in the payment period for family allowances and 27 approved the introduction of a single taper for Housing Benefit, although most were unhappy about the way the government intends to introduce it.

Jolyon Jenkins

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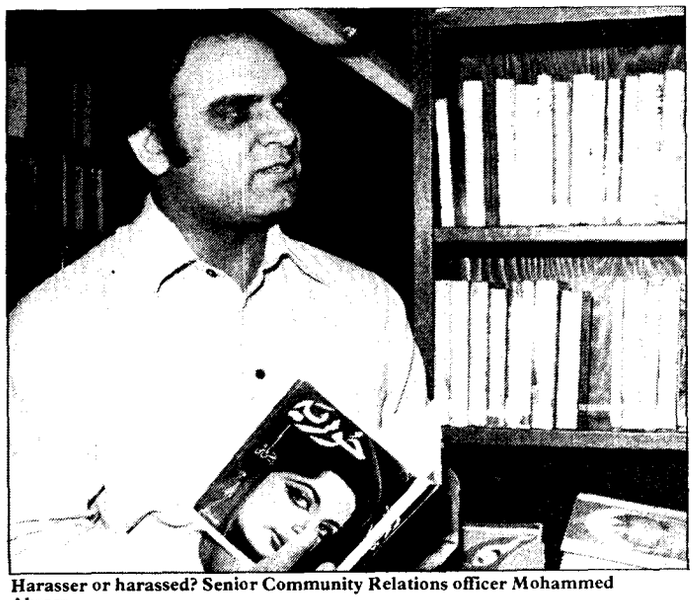
CRC split by sexual harassment allegations

ALLEGATIONS of serious sexual and racial harassment, which have provoked a bitter row within Lothian Community Relations Council in Edinburgh, are under formal investigation by members of the council's executive committee and the staff trade union ASTMS.

Three women, backed by six others who have previously worked at the council, have invoked the official grievance procedure against the senior Community Relations Officer, Mohammed Akram, accusing him of persistent sexual harassment and aggressive behaviour. Two of the women — Dawn Corbett and Glenys Watt — are still working for the council; the third — Dorothy Fall — says she left last month because 'there was no hope of working there happily.'



The Scotsman

Harasser or harassed? Senior Community Relations officer Mohammed Akram

Persistent denials

In a letter to the council's chairperson, M. Yousaf Inait, in August, Mr Akram alleged that the three women were involved in a 'orchestrated smear campaign' against him, and made a formal complaint of 'sexual and racial harassment'. This week, however, he repeatedly denied to the *New Statesman* that he had made any such allegations, and said that he was not aware of any allegations made against him. He also denied that any complaints were under investigation by members of his own executive and insisted that ASTMS was not acting for any members of staff.

In fact both the women's and his accusations have been discussed at a series of internal meetings since July. In September, the council's general purposes committee set up a special four-person subcommittee chaired by Habib Hashmi, the honorary secretary, to investigate both complaints. The subcommittee heard the women's allegations on 19 September. They met again to hear Akram's allegations on 30 September, but did not do so because of a procedural disagreement.

Three of the four members of the investigating subcommittee resigned from the executive at the AGM in October and Akram's complaint was eventually heard by Mr Hashmi and Mr Inait on 13 November. Meanwhile, according to ASTMS, the three women and Akram have both asked the union to intervene. Divisional officer Mike Watson said he was representing the women in what appeared to be a 'clear case of sexual harassment backed by supporting evidence'.

The three women have detailed a series of instances over the last two years when they claim to have experienced unwanted physical contact, including hugs, kisses, and hand holding from Akram. They have collected six written statements from other women recounting similar occurrences.

Yet Akram maintained that there were no internal difficulties which had prevented the council from carrying out its job properly. 'It is not in anybody's interest to hide anything', he said. 'We often from time to time, like in any other office, have small internal difficulties which we manage to resolve.' Staff relations were, he claimed, 'very good'.

The Edinburgh case, while particularly acute, may not be the only instance where Community Relations Council staff have allegedly experienced sexual harassment. Although nothing has been said officially, because of the risk of damaging race relations, there is known to be considerable trade union concern about several other similar allegations.

Rob Edwards

MISCELLANY

We rest our case

Judge Michael Argyle *has* had a eventful career. Last week we were very unhappy about the life sentence he dished out to an alleged football hooligan, in effect for 'waving his fist in a menacing fashion', and went over what is known in the trade as his 'previous'. New facts keep coming to light. Even before he shot to fame as the judge in the Oz case (during which Marty Feldman called him a 'boring old fart') in 1971, he was known as the 'Domino Judge', because all his sentences were 'three and fives' — the maximum number of years' prison for a variety of offences. And a postcript to the case earlier this year where he told an unemployed Rastafarian to get a job or go to jail: Lord Lane quashed the sentence on appeal, saying he 'preferred not to comment on the unfortunate aspects of the case'. Readers are invited to supply details of other offences to be taken into consideration.

Someone wake him up

Is Patrick Jenkin all right — completely *all right, that is? To judge from evidence reaching Miscellany, the experience of being sacked from the DoE seems to have totally unhinged him. There he was in Cardiff last month, telling local Tories — and we quote from the local paper — that 'Local Authorities should be given back responsibility for their own affairs in the face of "increasing government intervention"'. Can this really be the same Patrick Jenkin whose addiction to Local Government Bills made Ken Livingstone so popular — and Councillor George Tremlett a supplier of such fascinating news cuttings?*

South Atlantic blues

Remember how the Falklands war sent young entrepreneurs scuttling off to the South Atlantic under the impression that it was a new land of opportunity? We learn of one such adventurer who set out to make his fortune with a mobile fish and chip van business, but found the natives wilier than reports from our troops had suggested. As you might expect, there was no trouble getting fish — but potatoes were another matter. The few farmers who had some simply refused to sell . . . and then bought a van and started a rival round. The poor settler struggled on for a while selling cod and apologies but eventually returned home defeated. The story comes from a Manchester hairdresser who's just returned from a twelve month stint trimming the troops. The severe shortage of female company, he reports, has had rather odd effects. A troupe of dancing girls went out to put on a show. When they had left, the bedsheets which they had used were auctioned off, unwashed.

Clocks away

More inconsequential information relating to Lady Shirley (Tesco) Porter. We can confirm that Westminster City Council is in receipt of a highly dubious gift from the principality of Liechtenstein — haven for numerous shady European brass plate companies, including that of our own, very dear, Robert Maxwell. When asked about the £900,000 'glockenspiel' Lady Porter would only say: 'It is a fine new tourist attraction, and a magnificent gift'. Standing 10 ft high and 35 ft long, this uniquely tasteless object will consist of 25 bells, four bell ringers, and a large musical clock. At least the ratepayers of Westminster didn't have to pay for this latest eyesore, unlike the £230,000 they had to shell out for the erection of two rather incongrous Pagodaesque gates in nearby Gerrard St — designed, no doubt, to enhance the street's Chinese characteristics, they only succeed in making it look like a discarded Hollywood film set.

The truth about Ronnie

You'll be wondering why President Reagan referred to Princess Diana as 'Princess David' Almost certainly the correct reason is one suggested by the *NS* editorial assistant. One of Reagan's legion of advisers, goes the theory, thought up a very witty joke for the President. It would be an ingenious *play on words*, punning Diana's abbreviated name with 'Dai' — the Welsh contraction of David. (Because she's the Princess of *Wales*, see?) A complicated joke like this would need hours of coaching, obviously, if the President was to remember the punchline. In the end, Ronnie still fluffed it: he remembered the punchline but forgot the joke. OK, so it's pure speculation. But if you have a better explanation we should be delighted to hear it. The squeaky toys are now all settled into good homes, but plenty of honour and glory are still available.

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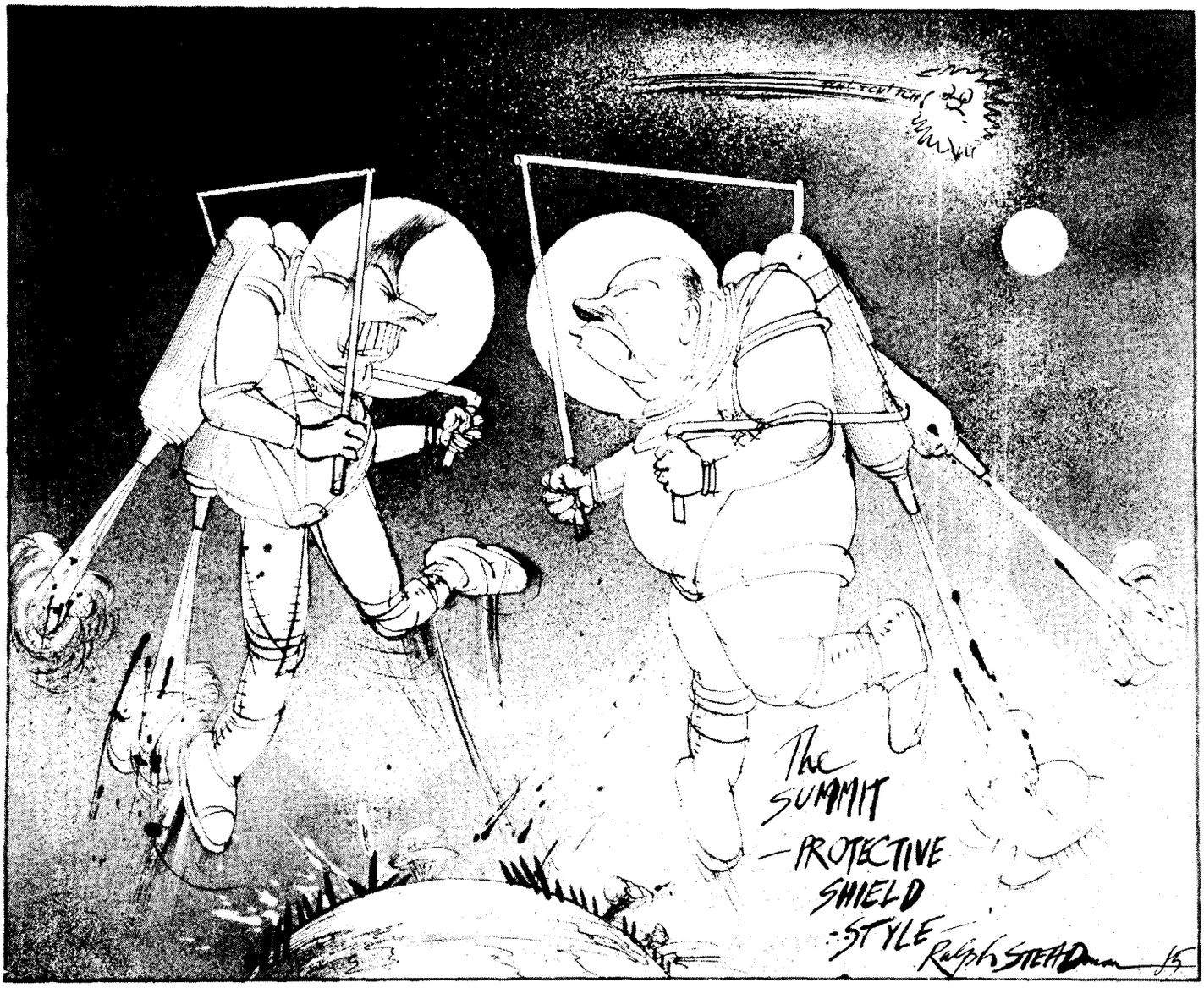

'Unprivate private members' Bills'

During the 14 November ballot for Private Members Bills, MPs in the well of Committee Room 10 were divided like orphans at an adoption session. Some were truculently independent, wanting to do their own thing, others were longing to be adopted by the cause groupies at the back. The latter included furcoated Mary Whitehouse, anxious to battle against TV licentiousness; and the NCCL, anxious to clarify the law on importing gay literature.

When the first name out of the box turned out to be Tom Clarke's (Labour, Monklands West) cause groupies descended on him like the predators in *The Birds*. A four-volume reference book showed him to be an RC, arousing fear that he would take over Enoch Powell's crusade against Warnock's limited endorsement of embryo research. Instead he plumped for a bill to aid the mentally disabled. Curiously, none of the sympathetic half-dozen in the lucky first 20, including Enoch Powell himself, wanted to take over his anti-Warnock Bill, so strongly supported by the Pro-Lifers.

More and more such Private Members' Bills have become very unprivate, with MPs serving as the fronts for outside cause groups, obsessed fellow MPs or even government departments anxious to exploit legislative crevices.

This is not in itself new. Even the famous smog-curing 1956 Clean Air Act for which the late, bombastic Sir Gerald Nabarro took credit, was fostered on him by Duncan Sandys when housing secretary. Sandys, unable to get it on the government's programme, adopted Sir Gerald as his front. Leo Abse, pioneer of homosexual and divorce reform, later used surrogate MPs to push divorce and other Bills.

Recently the adopter-in-chief of MPs and peers has been David Tench, the highly skilled legal officer for the Consumers' Association. Although he's not likely to get credit for it, the government's current Bill to abolish Sunday trading restrictions is a product of his several failed efforts. He tried to use Baroness Trumpington in the Lords and Sir Anthony Meyer and Raymond Whitney in the Commons. But, without government support, they failed against the resistance of USDAW, the Co-ops and the Sabbatarians.

Tench's greatest single success has come this year with the breaking of the solicitors' 180-year-old monopoly of conveyancing through the just-enacted Administration of Justice Act which makes room for licensed conveyancers. Despite rearguard resistance by Lord Hailsham, the government has promised that from next year building societies' solicitors also will be able to convey property.

Both these dramatic blows to the solicitors' monopoly, which have cut conveyancing costs by a third already, derive from the unexpected December 1983 Second Reading victory of the House Buyers Bill over a divided government and inept Law Society. This Consumers' Association Bill was introduced by Austin Mitchell, the former journalist, academic and TV presenter, who had been 'adopted' by David Tench after he came sixth in the Private Members' ballot.

That Tench-Mitchell victory was unexpected. Communications to Law Society secretaries suggested keeping the Bill's supporters occupied in their constituencies. Looking down at the serried ranks of Tory solicitors that Friday morning, one thought the solicitors' lobby had succeeded. At lunchtime Law Society representatives patted Tench on the head as a good loser. But the more Tory solicitors talked about how expert and inexpensive their conveyancing services were, the more they drove their colleagues into taking an early train.

Flushed with this success, Mitchell and Tench agreed to withdraw their Bill after cast-iron promises by the government in January and February 1984. The government later tried to renege under pressure from the Law Society and Lord Hailsham. But, partly because of a pro-competition cabinet battle led by Norman Tebbit with Mrs Thatcher's support, the government looks like keeping its word.

Andrew Roth

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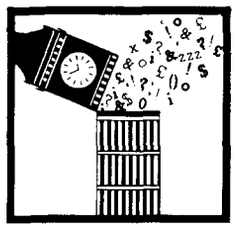

The CBI in conference: an exercise in futility

IMAGINE THAT THE TUC annual congress had been held this year without the transport workers or the miners; or Labour's without Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley; or the Tories' without Mrs Thatcher and Norman Tebbit. You then begin to have some idea of what the Confederation of British Industry's conference, held earlier this week in Harrogate, has been like.

Look for Lord Weinstock of GEC and you look in vain. John Harvey-Jones, the man to whom ICI owes much of its current success? Absent. Sir Peter Walters, chairman of BP? Elsewhere.

In fact, each of the three words that comprise the initials 'CBI' is misleading. It is not a complete confederation. For example, many of the companies operating in high technology — and whose efforts will help determine whether Britain develops as a modern economy or sinks gently into a society dependent on sunset industries, tourism and financial services — are absent. There were no delegates at Harrogate from GEC, Racal, Plessey, Ferranti, STC, Apricot or Logica.

Nor is the conference truly British. The third biggest delegation, with seven, came from AMI Health Care. (The CBI operates, when counting is needed, on the basis of one-delegate-one-vote.) AMI is the British subsidiary of an American private hospital chain. It tells visitors to its stall at the exhibition accompanying the CBI conference that it is the first and biggest private hospital group in Britain *to be run for profit.* (BUPA, you see, is a non-profit-making concern.)

Other foreign-owned companies represented at Harrogate included: Vauxhall, Ford, Philips, Berliner Bank, Bank of Ireland, Chase Manhattan, De Beers, Esso, IBM, Kodak, Mercedes-Benz, and Robert Maxwell's Pergamon (registered in Liechtenstein, you will recall).

Given the increasing impact of multinationals on the British economy a good case can be made for the involvement of such companies; but their ambiguous attitude to such issues as the exchange rate should be recognised. Companies that do a lot of importing are likely to be far more relaxed about a high exchange rate than British-owned companies fighting for exports.

In any case, those foreign-owned companies manufacturing in Britain at the sharp end of new technology were also absent: there were no delegates at Harrogate from Sony, Hitachi or National Semiconductors. (One bizarre consequence of their absence was that, when the trade union hero of many industrialists — Eric Hammond, the electricians' leader — visited Harrogate, nobody from any of the companies with which he has done single-union, no-strike deals was present to say how wonderful they thought it was to do business with him.)

So the CBI is an incomplete confederation, and not uniquely British. Nor does it properly speak for 'industry'. Of the ten largest delegations, three came from banks and three others from the service sector — four if you count British Telecom as still principally a service company. By contrast, many of Britain's major manufacturing companies sent just one delegate each — usually from second-tier management — with the apparent aim of keeping an eye on proceedings rather than contributing to them. Thus the PA Management and Consultancy Group, with six delegates, matched the combined, mute voting power of Thorn-EMI, BL, BAT, GKN, Lucas and Courtaulds.

PETER KELLNER

SUCH FACTS make the CBI gathering by far the most ludicrous, as well as the dullest, of all the autumn's conferences. Attempts to liven it up, with videotaped inserts — including one from Neil Kinnock extolling the virtues of marketing — and a satellite link up with the director of the United States Chambers of Commerce, failed to alter the essentially undemocratic and indulgent nature of the gathering.

Not even the exhibition in the annex alleviated the futility of the event. If anything, the ambience of the displays intensified it. Some were used for blatant quasi-political lobbying, such as the rival stands containing elaborate models of the Channel Tunnel and Euroroute. Others attracted passers-by with unlimited day-long supplies of free alcohol. Mr Paul Orchard-Lisle TD ADC MA FRICS, according to an invitation in every delegate's conference pack, invited us all to enjoy 'champagne and croissants' (in large, bold type) from 8.45 on each morning, and also to meet 'leading chartered surveyors' (in smaller, light type).

Nor was the seriousness of purpose of the event helped when, after a succession of speakers had railed against large pay rises and the vital need to contain wage inflation next year, Ralph Halpern rose to make one of Monday's keynote speeches. Mr Halpern is chairman of Burtons. Last year he earned £348,000, an increase of 75 per cent on the year before.

The sad thing about all this is not that the CBI possesses a monopoly of absurdity or hypocrisy; the Tory party has just as much to learn about democracy as the CBI, and it has to be said that some delegates to the Trades Union Congress occasionally depart from the strict code of sobriety for which they are otherwise justly renowned.

But at all the other conferences a real event of sorts took place. Power was exercised or displayed or anticipated. This very fact gave them their interest and occasionally their drama. But the CBI has no power. Stalin's famous question — 'How many divisions has the Pope?' — could be addressed with even greater force to the CBI. At least the Pope has millions of more or less obedient followers.

It is a pity that the CBI should be so feeble. Industry needs a clear and coherent voice and one that cannot be so easily dismissed as this week's conference decisions will be. The fact that most people who read this column are unlikely to be sympathetic to many of the things the CBI says is not an argument for celebrating its impotence. As long as capitalism survives in some form — and I would wager that even after another four or five Labour governments it will still be knocking around in some form — its interests need to be understood. The CBI conference should be the forum where those interests are debated and clarified. It is not.

Instead it is an occasion for vacuous exhortations to everyone present to pull their socks up, tighten their belts and, above all, 'change attitudes'. Even though the conference lasted just a day and a half, the number of times delegates were urged to change their attitudes was, I am certain, even greater than the number of appeals for trade union solidarity spread over five days of the TUC at Blackpool.

If the CBI were an absurd institution and its conference a fair reflection of its qualities, then fair enough: we could let it sail unmourned into the sunset and pay more attention to, say, the Institute of Directors. But the CBI as an institution, as opposed to a conference convenor, has valuable qualities. It has an impressive economics staff and its quarterly survey of business opinion provides some of the most useful evidence of the true state of industrial activity and expectations.

The latest CBI industrial trends survey, for example, contradicts the recent upbeat statements by Margaret Thatcher and Nigel Lawson. The survey finds there has been a sharp downturn in business optimism since the spring, and business generally more pessimistic than at any time since late 1982.

What is more, the CBI's director-general, Sir Terence Beckett, has both the business experience and the combative qualities that ought to make him an effective leader of Britain's business class. But the CBI conference diminishes him by demonstrating what a bedraggled, second-rate army he leads. After spending 48 hours in Harrogate in November I have to confess that for one I sympathise with Lord Weinstock, John Harvey-Jones and Sir Peter Walters. □

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DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF SPORT

The game of rugby exposes the British establishment's soft spot for the 'much misunderstood' South African regime — as an umbilical tie it stirs more passion among whites than the sanctions question. A tour by the British Lions team in summer 1986 is still on. But, as TOM McGURK reports, if it's cancelled the South Africans have their own secret plan. And Professor NORMAN LEWIS analyses (in disbelief) the House of Lords judgment against Leicester council, which was horrid to Leicester rugby club over last year's England team tour

British Lions on tour in South Africa in 1980

Bob Thomas

THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION at its last meeting in October discussed many things, including England's decision to take part in the Rugby World Cup in 1987. But on the most important matter the silence was deafening: the plans to send the British Lions (a team from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales) to play an international Test series against South Africa, in South Africa, next summer.

Normally at this stage in a season preceding such a tour, the manager and assistant manager (coach) would already be selected, to give them time in which to assess the merits of the players they want to bring. But, despite the preparation of a full fixture list including five internationals, not a word has been said in public. Apart that is from a comment from one official to the *Guardian*'s rugby writer David Frost that they were 'currently taking stock of the situation by talking to some of the senior players involved'.

In recent years, as the sports boycott of South Africa has extended to soccer, cricket, athletics and hockey, the rugby contact has continued unabated. Not only have Lions sides gone in the last decade, but also national sides like England and Ireland. In the face of increasing hostility at home and abroad, and especially the threat of a boycott by the Commonwealth nations of next year's Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, the rugby establishment has persisted in

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maintaining normal sporting contact.

Even they must be having second thoughts about the implications of next summer's proposed tour, but in the interim their tactic is to wait and see how the political situation unfolds in South Africa in the next few months; and to say nothing in public for fear of setting off a series of Anti-Apartheid demonstrations during the Home International season, which begins in January.

This summer, despite the frantic opposition of both government and people, New Zealand's national team, the All-Blacks, was determined to go ahead with its plans to tour South Africa; at the very last moment, action in the New Zealand courts stopped the tour.

Had that tour gone ahead, it would have coincided with the bloodshed and mass arrests which reached unprecedented levels in August. Before the tour, the UDF (United Democratic Front, South Africa's largest anti-apartheid umbrella grouping) had indicated its determination to meet it with public demonstrations. Since the imposition in July of the State of Energency in parts of South Africa, which has made all public and peaceful protest illegal, such demonstrations would probably have added to the bloodshed.

The UDF has indicated that if the Lions come next year, they too will be met by protest. This means that if the 1986 Lions do tour South Africa they will have to do it over bodies in the streets and despite the mass detention of even more political activists. In the past, rugby tourists departing their home county have had to run a gauntlet of protest and anger; on arrival in South Africa their problems were over, as their hosts extended enormous hospitality and gratitude. The very lives, though, of the 1986 British Lions players will be at risk from an ANC threat issued earlier this year, as could be the lives of Black South Africans who take the field against them, such is the feeling against what are seen as 'collaborators' within the black and coloured communities.

Bitterly disappointed by the failure of the All-Blacks to come (that merited bigger headlines in the South African press than the imposition of the State of Emergency) the South African Rugby Board has a secret plan ready should the same thing happen to the Lions. As a result of conversations I had with members of the Board in August in Cape Town, I gather that it is intending to invite a World International XV instead of the Lions. This clever ploy would lessen the degree of pressure that any single country would face, since the invitations would be to individuals instead of to national unions. In considerable secrecy, the International XV would assemble in South Africa next summer. This would be done with the connivance of the rugby unions around the world but with their public faces insisting that they have no jurisdiction over the 'right of individuals to travel'. Since the identities of those involved would also be a secret, the legal weapon that the New Zealand courts used would also be circumvented.

Something of the immense importance which the apartheid regime in Pretoria attaches to its international sporting links can be seen in the unprecedented departures from the everyday workings of apartheid which sport now enjoys in South Africa. The regime has gone almost the whole way to make sport multi-racial, and the bizarre sight of 'normalised' sport within an abnormal society has now almost been achieved.

Purely for playing of sports, such cornerstones of apartheid like the Group Areas Act, the Liquor Act and the Urban Areas Act have all been amended specially to present to the world the facade of normality within the walls of sports stadia. With the exception of schools, where racial mixing is still the exception, South Africa has virtually abandoned apartheid legislation in the organisation of sport. Today, there are only two legal reasons why a black can be in a white area: either he has a work pass or he has a ticket for a sports event! The West Indian cricketer of Indian descent, Alvin Kallicharran, is one of the two Indians allowed to live in the Orange Free State, under a 1890 bylaw which says that Indians may not stay for more than 72 hours without permission; clearly his prowess at the wicket impressed the Department of Internal Affairs.

Ironically, for the South Africans all this sports amelioration has come too late, as its tokenism vanishes beneath the cracks in the state itself and the rising international anger at the profounder obduracy of Botha's regime. But the rugby establishment has every intention of going ahead with the tour, imagining the situation on the ground gets back to 'normal'. In other words, if Pretoria can succeed in shooting and beating black unrest off the streets of the townships, kick-off will go ahead as planned next June. □

Look out: here comes the referee

BEFORE THEY REPAIRED to their watering-holes for the summer, the Law Lords, the keepers of the British constitution, delivered a judgment of shattering importance.

It will presumably also be of some minor consolation to the South African President, who is experiencing certain local difficulties of his own.

Last year Leicester City Council revoked the licence of Leicester Rugby Football Club to use a council recreation ground. It did so because the club wouldn't put pressure on its members who were selected not to take part in the English Rugby Football Union's tour of South Africa in 1984. The club resorted to the courts to reverse the decision, unsuccessfully until its final appeal to the House of Lords.

To recap on general principles used by English judges when reviewing decisions of an executive branch of government: where there isn't a parliamentary statute covering the situation, the judiciary operate the 'common law' to protect the rights of citizens only where action has been taken which is in salient respects beyond the pale — *ultra vires* is the term the lawyers employ.

This has been thought possible in only two broad sets of circumstances. The first is where the executive has used the wrong procedure. This has been used recently against Transport Minister Nicholas Ridley over the GLC lorry ban and Environment Minister Kenneth Baker over council grants, and is most often established where a decision has been taken without listening to what the other side has to say.

The other — and this is hardly ever successful — is where the decision is so outrageous that no 'right-minded' person could have reached the same conclusion. This has come to be termed the 'lunacy' test since anyone of sound mind ought to be able to find *some* justification for their actions if they try hard enough. So in 1977 the House of Lords upheld the right of Conservative Tameside council to unravel the plans of its predecessors for comprehensive schooling in its area. Even though the decision was badly timed, unfortunate in many of its consequences and in other respects less than desirable, the council had not done what no sane or rational set of councillors could have done.

AND THERE HAS stood the law for many years. In recent years of course some funny things have been happening in the courts. Ask Ken Livingstone, ask the NUM, ask the union members at GCHQ. However, *at a stretch*, most of them could be fitted into the conventional wisdom of arcane legal doctrine. But not this.

Lord Roskill, delivering the main judgment on Leicester in the House of Lords, said that he would, if pressed, have said that the council's action was totally unreasonable in the 'lunacy' sense.

This ought to be seen in the light of Lord Diplock saying in the GCHQ trial in 1984 that the irrational test applied

> to a decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it. Whether a decision falls within this category is a question that judges by their training and experience should be well equipped to answer, or else there would be something badly wrong with our judicial system.

However, we are not yet finished. Lord Roskill, after his aside on the 'lunacy' issue, determined that Leicester council had acted with 'procedural impropriety'. But try as I may, I cannot, after reading and re-reading the judgment, work out in what sense the procedure was improper. The football club was allowed to express its views and did so clearly. The fact was that those views did not coincide with those of the council and its interpretation of its duty under the 1976 Race Relations Act.

The Law Lords simply did not like what the council did and turned the law upside down in order to express their distaste.

The logical consequences of the Leicester case would cause constitutional pandemonium. Even if it's a one-off, recourse to the courts becomes even more of an expensive lottery than before.

British constitutional and administrative law is defective in many respects. We urgently need constitutional safeguards to expand our vision of participative democracy, and a neutral and humane judiciary will need to play a key role in establishing them. But there must be some doubt as to whether the judiciary as presently constituted is capable of performing such a role.

Norman Lewis

Norman Lewis is Professor of Public Law at the University of Sheffield

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DAYLIGHT ON THE SUN

Ever wondered how those concerned and pleasant fellows at the *Sun* talk when they're preparing the paper? MARK HOLLINGSWORTH found out

THE RUSH IS ON in the *Sun* news-room on the 3rd floor of the Bouverie St London HQ every day from 3 pm — 11 pm. The first edition has to be away between 6.30-7.00. Kelvin MacKenzie, *Sun* editor since 1981, will be found there any time after 4 pm sorting out the 'splash' (cover story), sketching ideas for headlines, re-making pages.

As often as not that means hovering around the art desk, near the chief sub-editors' table and the 'back bench' (night editors). The art desk employs 'casuals' to help out the full-time staff, and between 13 June — 30 October this year 29-year-old Peter Court was one such casual. He worked within earshot of the senior editorial staff who, subject to Rupert Murdoch as proprietor, make the *Sun* what it is: 4,200,000-a-day-plus circulation.

Peter Court is an NUJ member; and by personal politics no right-winger. Political affiliations cutting across the editorial policy of the paper aren't uncommon in Fleet Street. If they were, just about everybody would have to be in the Monday Club. He admires the technical skill of the *Sun*. He'd like to work in magazines and didn't put in time at the *Sun* for any other reason than that 'I needed the money; and to learn from their professionalism' though he did think there might be a cartoon strip in the way various Fleet St editors carry on — so kept a notepad at the ready.

Critics of the way the *Sun* 'dumps on everyone' haven't much to gain, he thinks, from concentrating fire on editor MacKenzie and his senior editorial colleagues. 'What's needed', he says, 'is solidarity between the unions', especially, in this context, the NUJ and NGA. All the same, it's MacKenzie and his deputies whose personal or working assumptions dictate what turns up in the *Sun* each morning.

Setting aside the notoriety and sales figures it isn't after all a very big paper to put out — tabloid not broadsheet, 32 pages, some 30 news stories a day including titchy ones, excluding sport, showbiz etc. Watching MacKenzie at work (or when he's away, one of his deputies) 'he can and he does put his stamp on the whole paper, sending for pages and re-shaping them'. An issue of the *Sun* is its master's voice.

Between June and October Peter Court jotted down the kind of remarks that float between senior *Sun* staff as they plan an issue:

● The evening of 2 August 1985. A Friday. Kelvin MacKenzie himself is on holiday. Dave Shapland is acting editor. A picture of one of the 36 people who have won *Sun* bingo is to go on the cover, it's agreed. A sub-editor suggests a picture of an Asian man with his winnings stuffed in the folds of his turban.

'No, I'm not having pictures of darkies on the front page', says Shapland.

A night editor agrees: 'That's the last thing our readers want — pictures of blacks raking it in'.

Sun bingo winners on the front page next day are all white. The lone Asian winner out of the 36 is with the others on p 4.

● Two weeks later. Thursday 15 August. News of South African President P. W. Botha's major speech has come in, which appears to give the black majority a greater say in their country's affairs.

MacKenzie remarks: 'Well, Botha has said the days of white power are over in South Africa. What he doesn't say is what's going to happen when the darkies come down from the trees'.

● Sunday evening 29 September. The *Sun* is covering the riots. The night editors come to life when reports reach them of two white women who have been raped. 'This is it', says an executive. 'Two white women raped by the mob. Or should we say by the yard'.

The following morning's editorial will read: 'The *Sun* has constantly championed the rights of the black communities in Britain'.

● Sunday 6 October — the night of the riot in Tottenham. Sunday is usually a quiet working day. Not this Sunday. The *Mirror* is going to print the story by Sara Keays timed to coincide with Conservative Party conference. The *Sun* decides to delay the printing of the 3rd edition so it can pirate the story straight from the *Mirror*. It's going to be a big operation. Kelvin is coming in personally at 10.30 pm to supervise it.

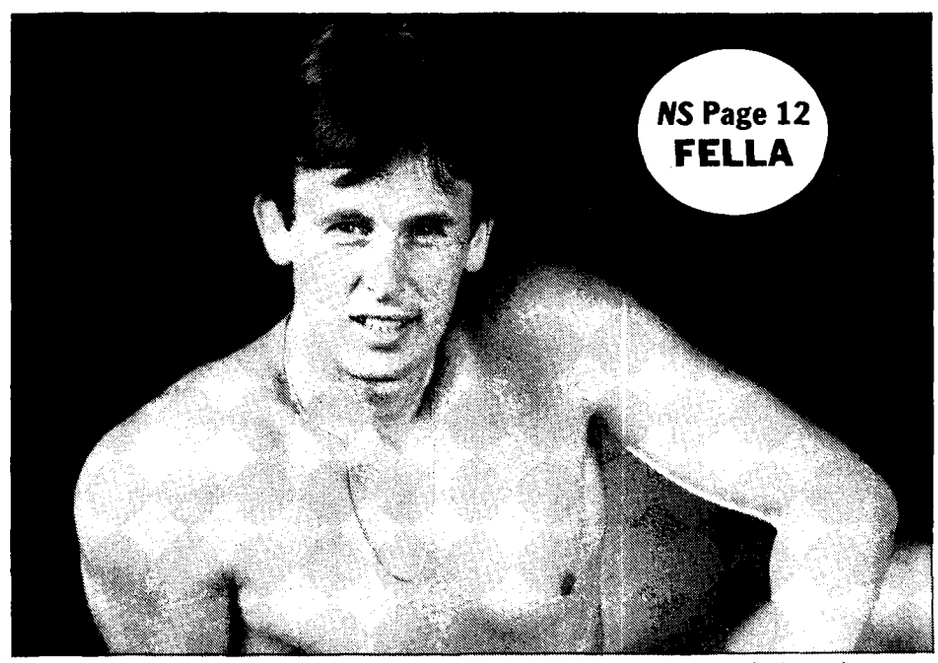
'Almost from the time I start my shift' notes Court 'things start to go wrong . . . a small disturbance in North London has turned into a riot of epic proportions. A police raid on a household has resulted in the death of a black mother of five. It's a story. Then a *real story* appears. The rioters are shooting at the police . . .

'Kelvin is slightly stunned when he discovers this: "Three police shot. What's happening? They didn't let the miners do that. What's holding them back? If this was South Africa we'd be shooting back by now". Later in the evening a night editor comes over to the art desk and says "We've got a quote from a policeman — 'The bastards are shooting at us now'. Give us a trace of that headline. You can put in the word 'black' if you like".' But the next day the *Sun* leaves the quote out of the headline and the story.

● Thursday 24 October. The *Sun* has published an editorial on 'black racism', asserting: 'We have tyranny in Britain. We have intimidation. We have a sinister attempt first to curb and then destroy freedom of speech. We have racism too — and that is what is behind the plot. It is not white racism. It is black racism.'

Tonight staff are working on a right of reply article by the Commission for Racial Equality. MacKenzie comments: 'They shy away from saying what they actually believe. They actually believe Britain is a racist society. This is a real wet SDP argument'.

● Wednesday evening 30 October. A page-long feature is being prepared on the gay community in the USA to be banner-headlined 'The Gay Backlash'. Roy Greenslade, *Sun* features editor, says: 'There's a great anti-gay backlash developing in the United States, which is what it's all about. If God had meant there to be queers' (he's quoting an American politician cited in the feature) 'he would have created Adam and Steve not Adam and Eve'.



page 7 fella from the Sun

Kelvin MacKenzie relaxing after putting the paper to bed. You can put us to bed any time, Kev! Kelvin's favourite hobby is squash — whacking those black balls about. All-male Kev is the guy to get your circulations going, eh fellas, oops we mean gals! Kelvin MacKenzie is 39. APOLOGY: Following a complaint to the Press Council, it has been ruled that our picture is in fact of *EastEnders* star Ross Davidson and not of Mr MacKenzie, to whom we unreservedly apologise. Mr MacKenzie, we fully accept, looks very different. Very different indeed.

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● Some stray exchanges as the weeks pass:

13 June. 'What's that horrible sound?' 'That's the editorial staff scraping the bottom of the barrel'.

20 September. News comes in that Sir Larry Lamb, *Daily Express* editor since 1983 but former editor of the *Sun*, has had a heart-attack. Kelvin MacKenzie: 'Let's pull out all the Mexico earthquake stuff. Larry's done more for us than all those spics'.

Dave Shapland: 'You know, when the history of journalism is written there'll be some real great editorial achievements acknowledged. Cudlipp on the *Mirror* and Larry Lamb on the *Sun*.

In ten years time they'll be saying the same of Kelvin'.

Read your sizzling *Sun*. □

THE NON-GENEVA SUMMIT

SALES PUSH IN TWO DIFFERENT MARKETS

The smoke clears to reveal that Mrs Thatcher only made a '*tiny*' movement to secure the Anglo-Irish deal. FIONNUALA O CONNOR analyses the perception on both sides in Ireland that she will stick by it

Associated Newspapers

THE DUST CAN SCARCELY be said to have settled, but the shape of the agreement signed a week ago in Northern Ireland has become a little clearer. As we could see from its published form there were many headings and few details: but the claims and counter-claims of interested parties have filled in some gaps and it is now more obvious that what we have is only an agenda for future talks, and dependent on the continued interest of Mrs Thatcher.

Nothing more should have been expected, of course. Irish diplomats, in contrast to their excited behaviour in advance of the last summit — the Chequers meeting between prime minister and Taoiseach which ended so ignominiously for Ireland — have for months past in London, Dublin and Belfast been working to minimise expectations of last week's second try. The method was recognised as a tactic in itself: downplay the forecast sufficiently and there might even be some congratulations as a result. Judicious leaking from an otherwise remarkably watertight operation thus prepared Unionists for an Anglo-Irish ministerial body and a secretariat in Belfast, and Nationalists for the absence of such long-sought reforms as the disbandment of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR).

'Preparation' is a word to be taken in context, the Northern Ireland context of absolutes. To say that Unionists had been forewarned by repeated leaks that a secretariat was on the way did not mean that they wouldn't be outraged when it arrived, or that the UDA — the legal, and largest, Loyalist paramilitary body — wouldn't immediately threaten to kill those who belonged to any secretariat or who 'collaborated' with it. The threat duly came.

At their party conference shortly before the Hillsborough summit the principal Northern representatives of constitutional nationalism, the SDLP, talked of 'A hook to hang something on — better if the mechanism isn't too defined, perhaps'. Northern realism seemed all the more modest in contrast with the denunciations after the event of the Republic's Opposition leader, Charles Haughey. 'Thanks for nothing,' he told Britain.

But as the days went by some observers thought popular feeling might be consolidating behind Dr FitzGerald, an accident-prone Taoiseach (prime minister) on this occasion looking less liable to mishap than usual. He was helped in various way: a display of unprecedented good manners from Mrs Thatcher, inclining that imperious head almost solicitously towards him to ask if he wished to speak first at their joint press conference, and studious avoidance of Nationalist triumphalism on that first delicate day by SDLP leader John Hume as all around him Unionists rumbled and grumbled.

The Republic's broadcasting service, Radio Telefis Eireann, took to describing Peter Barry, the foreign minister assigned to the inter-governmental conference, as 'Ireland's new Northern Minister'. Barry's new title will be balm to sceptical Nationalists and salt in Unionist wounds. Consequently, of course, it can be assumed to make Haughey's role as defender of the one true nationalist faith that bit more difficult to sustain — and Mrs Thatcher's as a Unionist impossible to carry off any longer.

Dr FitzGerald and Mrs Thatcher spoke much in Hillsborough of the 'good faith' in which both governments acted. Translated on the ground in Northern Ireland that means for once the same thing to the two communities. Nationalists presume it to mean that Mrs Thatcher will now exercise her famous will on their behalf to face down Unionist rage and resentment while Unionists anticipate the PM's stubbornness but call it treachery and betrayal. In ordinary conversations new perceptions of the Prime Minister are everywhere obvious.

A group of middle-aged Catholics at a wedding party approved with unconscious irony the very qualities they have deplored in the past: 'She's the only one who'll stand up to them, that's a woman who doesn't change her mind once it's made up.' On the other hand, a middle-aged mid-Ulster Protestant, already before the summit organising 'small teaparties' locally to discourage 'the soft voices who would say there's nothing in this agreement we cannot live with', also recognised that however Unionists fight this battle it had better not be through industrial action like the Ulster workers' strike which brought down the 1974 power-sharing experiment.

Merlyn Rees and Harold Wilson were easy meat. 'But we'll give Maggie no excuses to close down Shorts and the shipyard,' said the mid-Ulster Loyalist, 'for she's the woman would do

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it.' Unionists who cheered the jingoist of the Falklands war are more sure of their betrayal than are nationalists that they have secured anything truly worth celebrating.

IT IS UNCOMFORTABLE to be dependent on a Conservative prime minister's good faith, particularly that of a woman who famously has no interest in Ireland. It is particularly uncomfortable in a political tradition where 'selling out' is the ultimate sin and where purist voices are always present to invoke the past as a judgment on the pragmatist. For John Hume of the SDLP, beset by allegations over the past year's Anglo-Irish talks that they had one purpose only (to rescue his party as the standard-bearer of non-violent nationalism from the electoral challenge of the IRA's young and vigorous political wing), interpretation of the agreement is only the first tricky stage to be negotiated: there follows the even more trying period when results will be expected.

Hume managed to convince his deputy, Seamus Mallon, to support the agreement despite the latter's well-known conviction that reform of the notorious Ulster Defence Regiment, and marginally less unpopular (with Catholics) Royal Ulster Constabulary, must form part of the deal. Mallon broke publicly with his close friend and political mentor Haughey. He cannot be expected to wait long for some satisfaction, representing as he does Catholic impatience with a direct-rule state of Northern Ireland which has never attempted to radically re-construct the admittedly unrepresentative security forces. There is however the small problem of Unionist perception — what to Catholics is a force of murderous bigots is to border Protestants their only defence against genocide.

Already the task of selling the same agreement in two different ways has imposed strains. Mrs Thatcher with her comfortable majority and all-party support may sail through the initial storms, confident enough this week, for example, to leave substantially uncorrected Dr FitzGerald's assurances to his audience that the UDR's role had already been restricted.

Dr FitzGerald on the face of it has the harder task, at least in the short term. Haughey until this past week at any rate has been regarded as more than likely to replace him at the next general election.

Whether the nightmare vision of Haughey in power in two years time meeting a Labour PM to discuss British withdrawal and the urgent unification of Ireland will be enough to deter Unionists from their present course is another matter entirely. In the midst of their consideration of recourse to the courts, withdrawal of consent to be governed by pulling out of what limited form of local government Northern Ireland possesses, planning to resign their Westminster seats, they have been noting with especial bitterness that this agreement conducted entirely over their heads has been wrought by the leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party. 'It's always been the Conservatives who've pushed us hardest,' said one Protestant teacher ruefully this week. 'Look at Sunningdale, and now this.' If Mrs Thatcher pursues the confrontation and finally abandons an impossible selling job by tackling the UDR, the RUC, the administration of justice and equality in employment, Nationalists will be surprised, delighted, and will also note the irony of a Conservative government delivering what the last Labour administration signally failed to produce. Roy Mason, with his military solution, might even in time become the last Unionist hero. ☐

This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (On postcards please).

☐ If the Government gives the go-ahead for a Channel Tunnel I hope it will be air-conditioned. Otherwise just think of all that garlic smell bursting into Dover every time the wind is in the right direction. — Letter in *The Standard* (George Proffer)

☐ Thames Valley Eggs is offering a £10,000 prize for the first egg to be laid in Britain during the next two months with a comet-shaped marking on its shell. The Berkshire company says there are records of such eggs being laid during previous visits by Halley's Comet. — *Daily Telegraph* (G. M. Moger)

PRO-CHOICE OR PRO-LIFE

TO THE BACKSTREET BY THE BACKDOOR

In the second and concluding article in her survey of changing tactics over the abortion issue JULIA SOUTH tackles the ambivalence that even radicals can now feel

LAST WEEK (*NS* 15 November) we saw how misleading silence in Parliament may be when assessing the strength and activity of the 'pro-life' (anti-abortion) lobby. Since the defeat of the Corrie anti-abortion bill in 1979, anti-abortionists have been busy, and are feeling much more confident.

This June in the *Guardian* Polly Toynbee quoted anti-abortion former minister of health Gerard Vaughan (1979-82) as saying that at least three MPs would again consider taking up a private member's Bill like Corrie's to restrict abortion further. As it turns out (*see this issue p8*) the many Conservatives who have come high in this November's private member's Bill ballot are so far proving unenthusiastic about taking on the tremendous burden of trying to pilot anything so contentious and arduous through the House. But Vaughan asserts 'many of us have no doubt that if such a Bill came before the House it would have a very different result [from in 1979]'.

We only have to look to the United States to take this seriously. There 'pro-choice' groups are preparing for threatened re-criminalisation of abortion after a long period of liberal legislation. US anti-abortion groups are fire-bombing abortion clinics and intimidating women going in for abortions.

But what has the silence and the absence of a parliamentary campaign meant for the people who opposed Corrie? The ones who signed petitions, the ones who marched, or who argued the toss in their union branches? Within the movement for abortion rights, concerns have shifted a great deal since that heady victory over Corrie. Free from another defensive campaign, we could address divisions between women, the ways in which women are considered 'fit' or 'unfit' to be mothers. We recognised the very different struggles women face on either side of this divide.

For the woman deemed to be an 'unfit' mother, be she black, working-class, a lesbian, a single parent, disabled, or any combination of these, the struggle is most often not about obtaining an abortion, but about being able to exercise her fertility and have a child. Women who are not considered 'fit' to mother can be coerced into abortion or sterilisation, or they can be injected with the dangerous long-term contraceptive, Depo Provera, without their informed consent. They can end up sterilised, entirely without their knowledge, after an abortion or childbirth.

For lesbians, the struggle can be to have Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID), and to have this provided on the NHS. For a disabled woman, the issue can be to have the right at all to bring a child into the world.

Confronted by the abuses to which women are subjected when they are not white, heterosexual, middle-class and able-bodied, the movement for abortion rights, and the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) in particular, gradually altered its perspective. We stopped being 'pro-abortion', we became 'pro-choice'. We recognised the differing experiences and priorities of women when it comes to reproduction. Hence the split in NAC, when the Women's Reproductive Rights Campaign emerged to provide a forum and a campaigning body to publicise and fight around *all* reproductive rights issues, not abortion alone.

Politically, this change of course has been vindicated time and again. Straightaway we've had the new reproductive technology and the Warnock Report to untangle. The moral and political issues are very tricky. The focus is on infertile women. We have come a long way indeed from being concerned exclusively with abortion.

HAS A SIMILAR concern with having babies affected what in the past has been a broader support for a woman's right to choose an abortion? Of those who were involved in the Corrie campaign, how many would now rally against another anti-abortion bill? Can the very having of children weaken what was once

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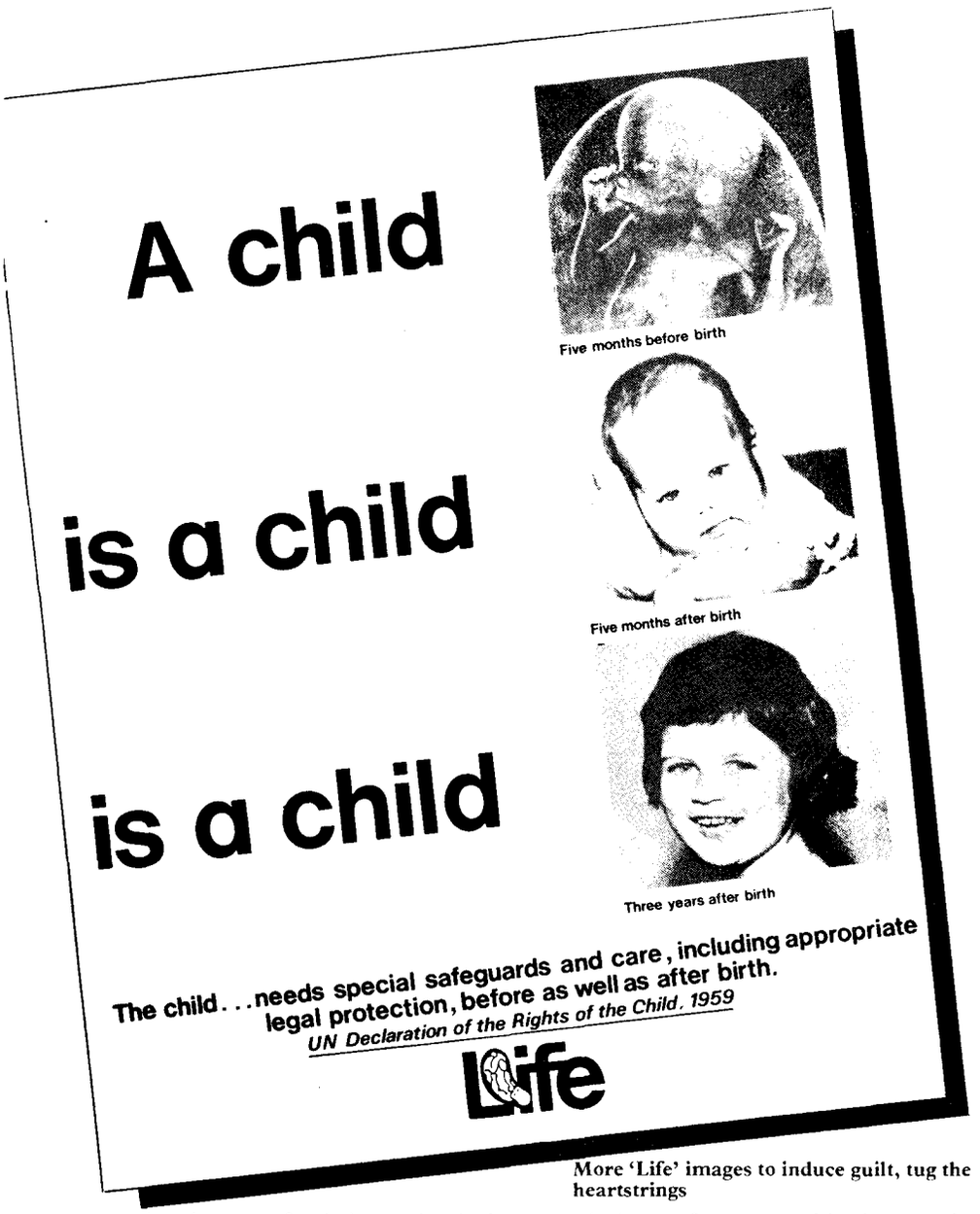
A child
is a child
is a child
Five months before birth
Five months after birth
Three years after birth
The child...needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.
UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959
Life

More 'Life' images to induce guilt, tug the heartstrings

unquestioned support for choice on abortion?

Those of us who marched on the Corrie TUC demo six years ago have all aged. The very concerns of the political movement have changed. Thatcherism is older too; the screws are tightening. There is less of the energy around that defeated Corrie. The mixed left is concentrating on more clearly industrial and class issues. But the fight for choice on abortion is too important and too fundamental to be left to the activists alone. It may feel as if we *won* the battle over abortion with Corrie, but we didn't and we haven't. It is only the terrain that has changed. Possibly some people reading this may feel equivocal about abortion, including women who doubt whether they would ever have an abortion themselves, however reluctantly pregnant. But we do not need to have had an abortion, or even be prepared to have one, to support a woman's right to choose. To be pro-choice is a neutral position; the only one. It allows every woman to decide for herself what she feels about abortion.

To be anti-abortion is quite different. It necessarily entails a condemnation of women who have abortions, and a commitment to preventing women from being able to obtain them. Having equivocal feelings and being anti-abortion are not the same.

Anti-abortion sentiment is in the air we breathe. It crosses party political boundaries. We are all susceptible. It can erode firmly held convictions. It can suddenly topple passionately held belief. Bernard Nathanson, a doctor who headed an abortion clinic in the US and performed 60,000 abortions, made a total about-face and is now an avowed anti-abortionist. He recently made the horrifyingly inaccurate film of an abortion, *The Silent Scream*, which is being widely distributed in this country by 'Life' and by Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC).

Anti-abortion sentiment often has little to do with the unborn foetus. It is all to do with women being uppity, making 'selfish' decisions, and having sex for pleasure rather than for procreation. It is against women's self-expression; and it appeals to men and women alike who are threatened by this growing phenomenon. 'Radicals' are not immune: 'Socialists for the Family' has sprung up in the US. How long before we see its equivalent in Britain? The new moral Right in Britain, with its particular contempt for sexual expression or pleasure of any kind outside marriage, looks to the Moral Majority in the States for leadership. In Britain, the aim is to take the moral initiative away from the liberal elements that pioneered abortion, and which liberalised divorce and homosexuality in the 1960s. Now the Right is no doubt re-grouping again after its 'appalling defeat' — thank God — over Gillick.

One of the cruellest sides to anti-abortion sentiment is the misplaced emphasis put on the dangers of abortion. It is put about that women who have abortions may become sterile, or may have great problems conceiving or bringing a baby to term. This is the price to be paid, is what is implied; and many believe it.

Now at last a study, published in April, entirely repudiates it. Undertaken jointly by the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the study followed over 7,000 women who had had abortions between 1976 and 1979. It found *no* significant increase in the incidence of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, still-birth, prematurity or low birth-weight babies amongst the women who had abortions and who then went on to have a child.

IT IS HARDER to chart a woman's feelings after an abortion. Many women's primary response is to feel exceptionally relieved. But women can have more contradictory and painful feelings: anger, grief, disappointment, guilt. In different circumstances there might have been a baby. It can be hard putting ourselves first. Some women have been pressurised or coerced. In this economic climate, when some women feel little choice but to have an abortion, because of lack of money and resources, they can feel very angry, and sad, and bereft.

None of us can predict what any one woman might feel about having an abortion. What we must be able to do is to explore and express the feelings we do have, without becoming defensive. Painful feelings about an abortion do not invalidate one's own, or any other woman's, right to choose. Any major life decision may bring up awkward and painful feelings. We can grieve for lost times or relationships, lost opportunities; we may even regret a particular decision.

What is crucial is not how a woman feels about her abortion, although, of course, this deserves our attention and compassion. What is crucial is that we accord to every woman the respect and integrity to make this decision herself; we recognize every woman as morally capable of deciding whether or not to bear a child. The more women experience this respect, then possibly the easier it will become for all women to put the experience of an abortion gently behind them, without after-effects.

To be anti-abortion is to withhold this care and respect from women. For anti-abortionists, a woman's 'natural' role is as wife and mother. She is *essentially* self-sacrificing. That is why in this era of a return to repressive Victorian values, we must be especially vigilant about choice on abortion. We must contest each attack as it comes; expose every abuse. We must explore our own ambivalence on the issue.

During the Anglican Synod earlier this year, John Gummer, then chair of the Conservative Party, suggested that bishops should concern themselves with abortion rather than politics! We should take heed. When did *you* last discuss abortion? □

Useful addresses:

Women's Reproductive Rights Information Centre, 52-54 Featherstone Street, London EC1. Tel: 01-251 6332.

National Abortion Campaign, 47 Waldram Park Road, London SE23 2PW.

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MEDIA

Autocracy rules in Charlotte St

MANDY MERCK

THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY of the Fourth Channel passed this month with remarkably little mention. Far from the Channel Bore and Swore of its turbulent arrival to the screen, it is now such a familiar aspect of the media scene that it attracts no special attention.

The difficulties of first TV-am and then the beleaguered BBC have taken the heat off Charlotte Street, which finds itself hailed in the year of the Peacock as a success story of Thatcherite enterprise — casualised, cost-cutting, competitive. But C4 has endeared itself to radicals as well as conservatives. With some 300-plus independent companies currently making more than 40 per cent of its programmes, the Channel seems to epitomise the 'regulated diversity' prescribed by Annan — and its out-of-house production system is now being enjoined upon the BBC.

Furthermore, although the passage of time has hardened innovation into convention, it's unreasonable to deny that the Channel has pioneered programmes distinctive in style — if not structure — and in their appeal to those previously uncatered-for interests mentioned in the Broadcasting Act, ranging from feminism to the far Right. C4 now seems the natural habitat of polemicists like Bea Campbell and Roger Scruton, not least because polemic, in the form of its *Comment* slot and *Diverse Reports'* frankly partisan journalism, is one of its central contributions to British broadcasting.

But, paradoxically for a Channel which has pioneered a suavely post-modern pluralism as both an ideological and economic hallmark, C4 retains a remarkably antiquated administrative structure. As a wholly owned subsidiary of the IBA, it is headed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Authority, currently numbering 14 men and two women, all of them white.

Such political 'representation' as exists on the Board tends to be entrepreneurial: this year's membership includes John Gau, a leading member of the Independent Programme Producers' Association, and Virago foundress Carmen Callil. (Back in 1980, relevant bodies like the Independent Film and Video Makers' Association were asked to suggest candidates and nominated, among others, black media sociologist Stuart Hall. Hall was not named to the Board, nor the IFVA asked again for its suggestions.)

Although the Board meets monthly, and must formally agree expenditure on projects costing over £500,000, effective power resides in the Channel's chief executive, Jeremy Isaacs. As the lynchpin of both its managerial and programming hierarchies, Isaacs is directly involved in a far wider range of decisions than any comparable TV exec. Access to his person is notoriously craved. Access is also sought to the Channel's 20 commissioning editors and assistants, not least because it has never practised a system of open tender.

Public 'access' to its airwaves is still dispensed philanthropically, in the weekly half hour of *Right to Reply* and the more occasional *People to People* slot. And, although transcripts of viewers' telephone calls to the duty roster are regularly circulated throughout the building, programme review meetings are closed to all but Channel personnel — and that includes the makers of the relevant items.

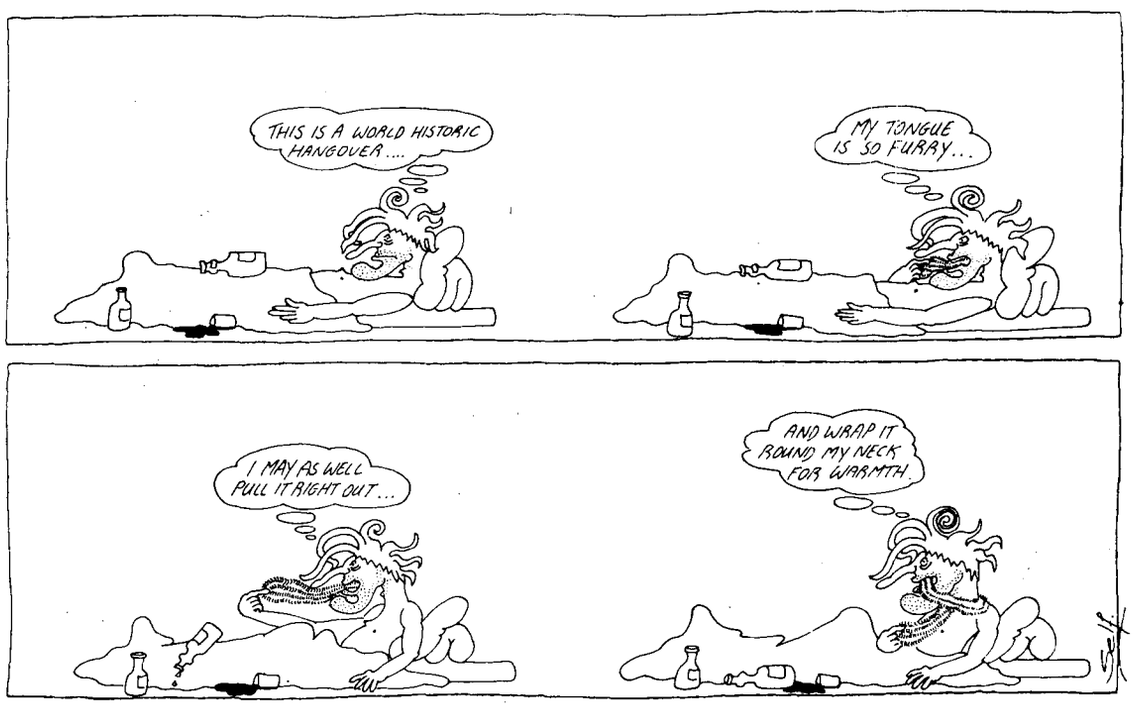
In effect, far more power is concentrated in far fewer hands at Channel 4 than in the BBC or the commercial companies. At present, with the commissioning editors encouraged to compete among themselves for resources rather than co-operate, the Channel's administration is hardly even oligarchical.

One broadcasting lobbyist describes the chief executive's performance as 'autocratic as much for good as for bad', but wonders who will succeed him. Others, including members of the feminist Women's Film and Television Network, are beginning to conclude that the Channel's internal operations cannot be separated from its output.

For five years, feminists in the industry have called upon the Channel to employ a commissioning editor for women's programming, parallel to the role of ethnic minorities editor Farrukh Dhondy.

Doubts have now been expressed about the ghettoising potential of such an appointment, as well as about the Channel's own commitment to equal opportunity. When senior management recently over-ruled the promotion of a woman secretary to Assistant Commissioning Editor (in spite of high qualifications and the wishes of her direct superiors) on the grounds that it would inspire similar ambitions in other clerical (i.e. female) staff, it set a surprisingly sexist precedent. The response currently mooted is to call upon the Channel to appoint an Equality Officer with a uniquely two-way brief — monitoring the Channel's own employment practices as well, as its external relations to both programme makers and viewers. □

3 out of 4 — *a national conference called by the Independent Film and Video Makers' Association and the Television Users' Group to discuss Channel 4's progress towards innovation, education and equal opportunities -- takes place at Manchester's Cornerhouse Cinema, 70 Oxford Street, on 30 November and 1 December. Details from 061-228 2463.*



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DIARY

Ian Williams

Liverpool

Remembrance Day saw the first meeting of Liverpool Labour Left, an organisation of people whose patience has finally snapped with the everstretching distance between reality and rhetoric in this city. An early speaker, inspired by meeting other victims, confessed that in his ward the mildest deviance had him accused of being way to the right of the Waffen SS. Others followed his cue and exorcised the political poltergeists of sloganised party meetings. 'Traitor to the working class', 'Scab', 'Sellout' were among the mildest, but my candidate is 'Comrade'. In context, it's now a four letter word — the warning froth in front of a tidal wave of vitriol. And it's not even clever vitriol any more. The wit and verbal dexterity considered a Scouser's birthright has been replaced by shamanistic chanting of political mantras. The need for exhausting repetition of words of power like 'Campaign', 'Jobs and services', or 'this Tory government', could be avoided if they were written on strips of paper and stuck onto Tibetan prayer wheels, but such forms of mechanisation are probably too modern for the comrades.

○

The LLL meeting was delayed half an hour by another tribal ceremony. The LOL, the Loyal Orange Lodge, were marching up the hill beating their huge war drums with bigoted fervour as though a Jesuit bit the dust at every stroke. The Lodges are one of the reasons for the former strength of working-class Toryism and the relative weakness of Labour in the city. You're not even protected by atheism. An otherwise sane shop steward once told me that because I'd gone to a 'protestant' school, as state schools are called, I was all right. I was a *protestant* atheist, not a *papist* atheist. It's this background of yes/no binary politics which encourages the 'agree with us or you're a class traitor' philosophy of Militant. The cry of 'No surrender!' is disastrously transferable.

The LOL is an entirely and authentically working-class phenomenon. The parade was a dubious testament to a high carbohydrate diet — the marchers looking as if they were weaned on chip butties and force fed on white sugar before being squeezed into their cheap synthetic marching outfits. Most distressingly, several of the Lodges from the South of the city are all black, but still prepared to toot the flute for bigotry and the Battle of the Boyne.

○

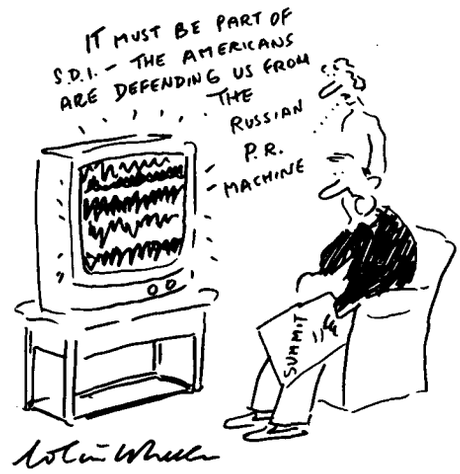
Loyalists like this are disconcerting. But the fawning loyalism of TV is *sickening*. Except for the news, I rarely have time to watch it, so it means that for weeks now a quarter of my viewing is of Battenberg family holidays. In Third World statelets it's common — and even understandable — that news is what the head shebang had for tea, so the daily drivel of royalist sycophancy clearly signposts our national future while at the same time making republicanism respectable.

○

My theory of the third-worldification of Merseyside is anyway already catching on. David Selbourne, pundit on China and India, came to apply his Third World expertise to the Liverpool liberated area. A pleasant hour or two of mutual *big* name-dropping established common ground on subjects as far apart as Indira Gandhi and the Cultural Revolution. He has edited the political writings of J. P. Narayan, hero of Indian Independence and of Mrs Ghandi's Emergency. Despite that peculiarly Indian air of saintly eccentricity, J. P. tried hard to make people want and work for socialism. He chided the monopoly nationalisers of his time: 'State Power and initiative are not the only means of building up a democratic socialist society, but popular initiative and day to day effort are also essential. Indeed the latter are ultimately more important.'

○

On the 16th Liverpool unveiled its own belated memorial plaque to the 27 local International Brigaders who never came home. Jack Jones came home then — and came again now for the ceremony. I last saw him in Toledo at the International Transport Workers Conference, where he met a Spanish colleague for the first time since the war. Even British stiff upper lips quivered as tears and wine flowed profusely. This occasion was less fraught with emotion but, as one of the last acts of the soon-to-be-disbanded Merseyside County Council, worth a few tears itself. There is also a memorial statue to the Brigaders, planned to go on the plinth empty since the toga-clad bronze of William Huskisson was toppled by demonstrators from the black community. In my NUR capacity I have objected that Huskisson should be put back. As president of the board of trade, he went to the Rainhill Trials and became the first man to be hit and killed by a train, possibly the only minister on whom rail workers have ever made a serious impression.



○

To escape and recuperate from Liverpool, I fled southwards for a few days. I'd also had an invite to a party. On the train I read in the *Guardian*'s left equivalent of the Court Circular that it was the socio-political event of the year. The Cuddly Left's picnic in Croydon was *the* thrash for realigners with dash. Chris Smith came all the way South from Islington to co-host it with Nita Clarke, Ken Livingstone's PR person. As a rule, parties are good in inverse proportion to the amount of quiche available. This one was very short on quiche — and dungarees as well, come to think of it, but I haven't yet erected a theoretical construct for them. There was, however, some uncomradely giggling at the news from Lambeth. Ted Knight is alleged to have been effectively deselected by his own ward, which has drawn up a Leaderless short-list of seven for the next borough council elections. Cuddlies trembled supportively at the thought of the presssures that would be put on those seven to withdraw.

Coming from Liverpool gave me immediate political refugee status. It was therapeutic to see people actually *talk* and improvise around a political theme, instead of clubbing each other to death with cliches. Therefore, after the soft, the cuddly, or even the firm Left, I offer for the free use of all would-be realigners, 'the *listening* Left'.

○

Wandering through to Euston for the Liverpool train, I idly wonder whether passport controls have been imposed at Runcorn Bridge yet, and what new and ingenious form of civic *harakiri* has been devised. I have advance warning of what I am returning to. A raucous shout from the other side of the barrier. 'Still on the right, Williams! You've *always* been on the right!' I turned and there was that glint of rolling beady black eyes like those of a teddy bear gone predatorily dingo. Our deputy leader, on his way to be told off by the trade union general secretaries, was announcing his arrival at Euston with his proverbial restraint and dignity. Homeward Bound, Williams!

ROGER WODDIS

Whose finger on the ball?

'There are so many fingerprints on the crystal ball you can't see what's inside.' — George Schultz, US Secretary of State, on the Geneva Summit

This is the week of the wise ones,
A time for the sages and seers
Who gaze at the glass of unknowing
And gravely foretell what appears.

O look to the light at Geneva,
Where days of decision are spent,
For there all the tellers of fortunes
Are piled ten-foot high in the tent.

The future is dark and uncertain,
The present full-bellied with words,
And all that amounts to their omens
Counts less than the droppings of birds.

And these are the experts who answer
Key questions that hang in the air:
Is Arbatov Gorbachev's tailor?
Did Weinberger cut Reagan's hair?

The hundreds who swear by the crystal
Explain as they finger the ball
The meaning of life to the millions,
Whose death will mean nothing at all.

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AP

Reagan proves once again that acting is the best qualification for a US president — especially for those tricky moments when there are no interpreters

EYES DOWN ON YOUR SUMMIT SCORECARD

Bored/puzzled by yet another Geneva summit? JACK MENDELSOHN's been there and shows us how to tot up the stakes

Washington

THE OUTCOME of the first US-Soviet summit in six years can be hailed as a long-delayed opportunity for the leaders of the two superpowers to meet and take the measure of each other; it can be touted as the beginning of a new 'process' leading to further contacts in the near future.

But on nuclear arms control, the principal issue which divides the US and the Soviet Union, the summit has not registered any substantial progress at all. What is at stake can be conceived very simply. Unless the US and Soviet Union agree to reaffirm and abide by their commitment to the SALT II and ABM treaties, there can be no hope of preserving the fragile achievements of the past. And unless they agree to constrain the US Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) and comparable Soviet defensive programmes, there can be no hope in the future of negotiating limits, let alone reductions in offensive weapons.

There are five areas in which the aftermath of the summit can be realistically assessed:

● **THE SALT II Treaty.** Reaffirmation of the still unratified SALT II treaty is the key to preserving existing limits on the strategic nuclear arsenals of the two superpowers. The US and Soviet Union have both pledged not to 'undercut' the agreement, but its expiry date is 31 December this year. Five months ago, the US modified its 'no undercut' commitment and President Reagan asked the Department of Defense to prepare a report recommending possible 'Proportionate Responses' to alleged Soviet violations of SALT II. The first part of this report was released just before the summit; in it the Secretary of Defense argued that 'a pledge to continue to adhere to SALT II . . . could make it difficult, if not impossible, to do other things we should do to make up for (Soviet) violations'.

The Secretary clearly implied that certain of the Defense Department's 'proportionate responses' would violate provisions of the treaty. If this is true, then US implementation of a policy of 'proportionate response' will lead inevitably to erosion and collapse of SALT II. But if, despite this advice from the Defense Secretary, the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting has produced a genuine and mutual commitment to abide by the terms of SALT II, we can score 1 for the summit; on the other hand, if post-summit American policy is that of 'proportionate response', score the summit 0.

● **The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.** The ABM Treaty is the key to preserving existing limits on strategic defensive forces. On 6 October, the President's National Security Advisor announced off-handedly during a television interview that this treaty — which keeps existing defences against strategic weapons limited and severely restricts the development of the new, space developed systems — did not mean what everyone, including the Reagan Administration, had been saying it meant for the past thirteen years. As put forward by the President's assistant, the new interpretation of the ABM Treaty would permit both sides to engage in extensive work on space-based defences. In fact, it would allow any development and testing activity short of final deployment of a fully equipped space-based system.

In an attempt to allay criticism from Congress and from NATO allies (who have properly viewed the ABM Treaty as the 'Magna Carta' of arms control), the Secretary of State announced that although the new

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interpretation was 'fully justified', the Administration would for the time being act in accord with the previously accepted version of the treaty. But the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Richard Perle, a key advocate of the new interpretation, also stated that in his view the US has 'a full legal right' to undertake Star War tests and that 'it remains to be seen whether' the US will continue to adhere to the previous 'restrictive' or a 'permissive' interpretation of the treaty, with the option to shift from one to the other at any time. Accordingly, if, after Geneva, the US sticks to the 'restrictive' view, score another 1 for the summit. However, if the US tries to reinterpret the AGM Treaty when and as it will, enter a big zero on the summit score-card.

● **Star Wars.** Renewed commitments to SALT II and the ABM Treaty can only preserve what little is left of arms control. The key to future reductions in strategic and intermediate-range offensive weapons — and hence the key to breaking the impasse in the Geneva arms control negotiations — is what happens to the President's vast proposal to erect a shield against ballistic missile attack. So far, on his way to making nuclear weapons, as he claims, 'impotent and obsolete', the President has succeeded in ensuring that both sides will cleave even more tightly to the option of increasing their offensive weapons.

In the Pentagon report, the Secretary of Defense, in a rare moment of strategic lucidity, conceded that 'even a probable territorial defense (against ballistic missiles) would require us to increase the number of our offensive forces and their ability to penetrate Soviet defenses to assure that our operational plans could be executed'. In other words, *without an agreement to restrict new defensive technologies, not only are reductions in offensive weapons impossible, but increases in offensive arsenals are likely as the two sides hedge against the unknown.*

If, after the summit, the two sides are prepared to work out additional understandings and definitions as to what research, testing and development activities on strategic defences will be permitted under the 'restrictive' interpretation of the ABM Treaty, then you may score another 1 for arms control. But if Star Wars is allowed to continue unconstrained, then it is another zero.

● **Euro-forces.** Since the beginning of the strategic arms control process, the US and the Soviet Union have sparred over constraints on Euro-Forces — i.e., forward-based US weapons, the UK and French nuclear deterrents, and Soviet SS-4, SS-5 and SS-20 missiles. Any significant reduction in the Soviet strategic arsenal must be accompanied by limitations on British, French and NATO intermediate-range forces. Any projected decrease in the ratio of long to intermediate-range weapons, the Soviet Union argues, depends on some form of predictability and stability in the European balance. It also requires continuing assurance that these intermediate-range forces will not be used to bring about any substantive change in the 'strategic' situation once the superpowers enter the post-reduction environment.

It is not unreasonable to expect that, if 'deep cuts' are agreed in US and Soviet weapons, Euro-forces will represent a proportionately greater segment of the overall balance. This could be true, even without reductions, if the NATO intermediate range nuclear forces modernisation were to be carried out, together with the UK Trident and French M-4 MIRV missile programmes. As it is, the bargain basement frenzy for '50 per cent reductions' lends cogency to the perennial Soviet call for the elimination of US forward-based systems — and to its more recent appeal for direct negotiations with the UK and France on intermediate range forces.

There is an obvious tactical advantage to the Soviet Union in keeping the issues linked, but if the Euro-force problem can be separated from the Star Wars/strategic offensive weapons complex of issues, then it might be reasonable to add another score to the summit. But if the Euro-forces issue remains lost in Star Wars, it's another zero for the prospect of arms control.

● **Strategic offensive forces.** Out of the flurry of pre-summit proposals and last-minute jockeying for position, the two sides came up with superficially similar proposals for reducing and restructuring strategic offensive forces. Both sides now call for:

- 6,000 missile warheads and bomber weapons.
- Between 1,650 and 1,800 nuclear delivery vehicles.
- No more than 50 to 60 per cent of missile warheads on land-based systems.

But these figures, and the hyperbole that has accompanied them, conceal some fundamental differences. There is serious disagreement, for example, over:

- Whether the 6,000 figure includes short-range bomber weapons (the Soviet position) or not (the US position).
- Whether the 6,000 figure is a single aggregate of ballistic missile and all bomber weapons (Soviet position), or two separate categories of ballistic missile and long-range bomber weapons (US position)
- Whether the 1,650-1,800 nuclear delivery vehicle figure includes intermediate range euro-systems (Soviet position) or not (US position)
- Whether this 1,650-1,800 figure is a single aggregate (Soviet position) or made up of two separate categories for ballistic missiles and bombers (US position).

There are clearly other contentious areas — for example, bans on mobile missiles and 'new' strategic systems — but these are secondary clutter, ready to be negotiated away when and if these larger issues fall into place. If, unexpectedly, the two sides can resolve these differences over strategic offensive weapons systems, then the summit will have earned another point. But if the mind-numbing generalities and ellipses of the final Geneva statements indicate that the President and General Secretary have simply passed their differences on to the negotiators for yet another round of talks, there is no score at all. □

Jack Mendelsohn, a former US Foreign Service officer, was a member of the US SALT II and START delegations. He is presently deputy director of the Arms Control Association in Washington.

THE OTHER DIASPORA

ARAFAT ADDS A TWIG TO THE OLIVE BRANCH

Yasser Arafat's latest offer could have paved the way for peace, says SCOTT MACLEOD, as PLO leaders meet this week in Baghdad

Cairo

THE CAIRO declaration renouncing terrorism is another signal, if any more were needed, that the Palestine Liberation Organisation is prepared to forsake the gun for the olive branch.

The 7 November announcement by Yasser Arafat was hardly greeted with a flourish of trumpets by those it was most intended to please, namely the United States and Western European countries like Britain whose opinion of the PLO may greatly determine whether the four million Palestinians under occupation and in the Diaspora will ever get their own independent state. No doubt many would sympathise with the reaction, voiced by an aide to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, that only a simpleton could believe any of the PLO chairman's promises.

If one considers that there is little new of substance in the Cairo declaration, then perhaps an indifferent response to it is understandable. Arafat said the PLO opposed 'all external operations and all forms of terrorism', by which he meant that violence is permissible only against Israeli military targets inside historic Palestine. Arafat's obvious qualification concerning violence was this: 'The right of resisting foreign occupation is a legitimate right that cannot be denied.'

Except for a fresh assurance that the PLO leadership will actively prosecute and punish Palestinian guerrillas or factions who violate this code, it has all been the PLO's policy since 1974. Yet, for several reasons, the Cairo declaration should be viewed as a constructive step.

BETWEEN AUGUST and October, the largely Arab-initiated peace process in the Middle East was thrown off track by a series of incidents which have generally become known as the Achille Lauro affair. In the poisoned atmosphere which followed, talks collapsed at the Foreign Office, involving a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation which included two members of the PLO's ruling executive committee. One of the PLO men refused to sign a statement recognising Israel's right to exist.

Afterwards Arafat came under heavy pressure from Jordan's King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. For the

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past year they have invested much time trying to advance the PLO's cause and win it respectability, especially in American eyes, with a view to encouraging US pressure on an intransigent Israeli government. Hussein and Mubarak felt with some justification that Arafat was botching things up. The failure of the London talks stung: Hussein had desperately hoped the meeting with Sir Geoffrey Howe could be a prelude to American acceptance of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

The timing of the Cairo declaration, coming as it did after not-so-subtle rebukes from the Jordanian and Egyptian leaders, amounted to a PLO admission of at least partial guilt. No, the PLO did not acknowledge involvement in the Achille Lauro sea-jacking. But Arafat was recognising that if he wishes to be taken seriously as a player in peace negotiations, he must do everything possible to prevent renegade terrorism and at the same time effectively co-ordinate his diplomatic moves.

Arafat's handling of the Achille Lauro affair fallout reflected something of a change in style for the PLO, which customarily has been at its most vacillating or uncompromising when under pressure. It took a fair amount of pride-swallowing to issue the Cairo declaration. The gut reaction of many of Arafat's advisers — and probably of the chair himself — would have been to focus on the Israeli and American violations of Arab sovereignty, which had aroused much anger in Arab public opinion. But by using his head, Arafat reaffirmed the PLO's commitment to the most significant Palestinian peace proposal in many years: the 11 February 1985 'Amman agreement'. in which Arafat and Hussein forged a partnership to 'move together toward the achievement of a peaceful and just settlement of the Middle East crisis.'

The Amman agreement was a watershed. For the first time, the PLO accepted the land-for-peace principle embodied in United Nations Security Council Resolution 242: if Israel returned the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the PLO would let Israelis live in peace. Arguably, after the PLO's military setback in Lebanon, Arafat had few other options. Still, the Amman agreement offered PLO concessions that must be taken seriously.

Significantly, it marked the abandonment of Arafat's 1974 proposal, issued from the rostrum of the UN General Assembly, for a single democratic state in Palestine for Arabs, Jews, Moslems and Christians. It, also, cast aside a strategy favoured by some PLO leaders that any Palestinian mini-state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip be used as a staging ground for conquering Israel. Finally, the Amman agreement effectively repudiated article 9 of the Palestinian national charter adopted in 1968 stating that 'armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine.'

THE AMMAN agreement showed an understanding for the give-and-take of the bargaining table. Because Jordan — not only in American perceptions — is infinitely more trustworthy than the PLO, it is a preferred negotiating partner. This was the clear message in President Reagan's 1982 peace plan for the Middle East, which spoke of Palestinian rights, but not self-determination or a role for the PLO. So in the Amman agreement the PLO abandoned its demand for an independent voice at the negotiating table, consenting to be represented within a joint delegation with the Jordanian government. The PLO agreed that any Palestinian state emerging from peace talks would be confederated with the Hashemite Kingdom, signalling a willingness to be flexible on the central question of whether a newly created Palestinian state would be truly independent, at least initially.

Arafat has not relinquished the most important concession of all, explicit recognition of the Jewish state. When I saw Arafat in the Jordanian capital recently, I asked him when he would do this. 'Let us make a bargain,' Arafat said. 'Why must only Yasser Arafat offer concessions? They want me to betray my people? Let us have this international conference without preconditions.' Arafat said the Amman agreement, with its proposed Jordanian Palestinian confederation, was as far as he could go for now.

The PLO executive committee, meeting in Baghdad this week to review Arafat's discussions with Arab leaders, will have to consider the increasing pressure from Hussein and Mubarak to make the ultimate PLO concession as the price of admission to a future peace conference. But the PLO is unlikely to be swayed, by Arab pressure or anything else, unless the United States and other influential parties finally accept the Palestinians' right to self-determination. □

PAST LESSONS REMEMBERED

SPAIN SHAKES OFF FRANCO

Ten years after Franco his relics are crumbling, says DAVID JOHNSTON

ON 20 NOVEMBER 1975 General Francisco Franco, the last of the European dictators, died in his bed. Surrounded by the relics of the Catholic Spain he had so zealously upheld — St Teresa's withered arm and the mantle of the Virgin of Pilar — doctors fought for a month to keep him going.

A regular series of medical bulletins, increasingly macabre in their detail, kept the nation on tenterhooks. The sense of expectation, the anxiety became almost tangible. Eventually, after even the possibility of freezing the old dictator had been considered, the life-support machine was switched off. Spain was plunged into uncertainty.

Franco had ruled an incredible 40 years, the very incarnation of the one man state. His position of absolute supremacy from the end of the Civil War was reflected in his titles of *Generalísimo* and *Claudillo*. It continued undiminished right up until his death.

Although the style of Francoism changed over the years, from the savage witch-hunts of the 1940s to the total commitment to consumerism in the '60s, the dictator never relaxed his personal grip. Appointing and dismissing his own ministers, changing State policy with a word, Franco simply *was* Spanish politics. Even on his deathbed, Franco demonstrated his personal and political intransigence by insisting on the execution of five Basque terrorists, despite protests from all over the world.

So ten years ago this month responsibility fell upon the untried shoulders of Prince Juan Carlos, named by Franco as his successor in 1969. For six weeks in 1974 Juan Carlos had held power during one of Franco's increasingly frequent bouts of illness, only to have it taken back again by the seemingly indestructible dictator. The psychological consequences of this for the future king were to be far-reaching. Crowned Juan Carlos I of Spain just two days after Franco's death, he rapidly proved that he had no intention of being the agent for the posthumous continuity of Francoism. The dictator's boast that 'all was tied up and tied down for the future' proved hollow.

Spain's leap from 40 years of absolutism into modern democracy has largely been the personal achievement of the King. He could have chosen the softer option of continuity. But within two years of Franco's demise the Socialist and the Communist parties were legalised and popular support for democracy had been mobilised in a referendum. In 1977 Spain's first elections for 40 years were held.

The institutions of Francoism were rapidly dismantled and replaced with the political apparatus of parliamentary democracy. Running parallel was the demythification of the figure of Franco himself and the questioning of the holy nature of his 'Crusade', the official title for the Nationalist rebellion of 1936. Streets and public squares were re-named.

In towns and villages all over Spain statues of Franco were torn down. It was as though the nation were physically shaking off the past forty years. Of more consequence was the appearance of a spate of publications openly critical of the Franco years and giving Republican accounts of the Civil War. Picasso's *Guernica* arrived in Madrid. The process of challenging official regime-sanctioned history had begun.

Of course, it has not all been plain sailing. Spain has compressed the whole European post-war experience, both political and social, into one decade. The dropping of censorship in particular has paved the way for a revolution in the sexual *mores* of Spain's larger cities.

It all proved too much for the extreme Right. Tejero's pistol-brandishing erruption into the *Cortes*, the Spanish parliament, in February 1981, provided an example around whom his Spaniards could rally.

There are still hangovers from the Franco regime. The economic infrastructure of the country, the creation of capitalism given free rein by authoritarianism, has proved resistant to change. Franco's insistence on centralism has produced a whole series of regional problems. Although the Socialist government has moved to deal with these problems, the embittered Basque terrorist movement, ETA, is still threatening to destabilise the new democracy.

But from any point of view the Spanish transformation of the last ten years has been a considerable achievement. □

David Johnston teaches in the Department of Modern Languages, University of Strathclyde

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LETTERS

Disabled people — right to life

Alison Davis, Colchester, Essex

Julia South, in her article on 'anti-abortionists' (*NS* 15 November) seems to have a very ambivalent attitude towards disabled women.

She pays lip service to the terrible pressure put on disabled women to abort their children, but then lists foetal abnormality as a legitimate ground for making an exception to the upper limit on abortion of 24 weeks.

I wonder how she would reconcile this with a feminist outlook. As a woman with a severe physical disability — spina bifida — I find her attitude insulting on many different levels. If I am an equal human being, why is it legitimate to kill an unborn baby on the grounds that it would otherwise grow up to be like me? Such a philosophy is deeply offensive to me and surely irreconcilable with a truly socialist perspective.

Julia South also seems to be ignoring what are perhaps the most important issues of all, namely that the reason so many people of differing backgrounds (the majority, despite what she implies, being from working class environments) recoil from abortion is because it takes a life. It is a biological fact that life begins at conception, and abortion no more 'prevents pregnancy' than it 'prevents handicap'.

I do not believe women will ever achieve liberation from oppression by claiming the right to oppress and kill an even more vulnerable group — their unborn children. Resistance to oppression must surely be based on solidarity with other such groups, and a recognition that pitting the rights of one against another is divisive and ultimately self-defeating. And it must also acknowledge that killing the people who present us with problems is an indefensibly violent way of solving problems.

Disabled Women for Life was set up to protect the most vulnerable and oppressed group of human beings in our society from the discriminatory attitudes of those who say they are better killed — surely about as far as one can get from the true spirit of feminism. We can be contacted at 18 Ash Grove, London SE20 7RD.

Images can hurt us

Lesley Dike, Women's Reproductive Rights Information Centre, London EC1

How many *New Statesman* readers did a double take when they looked at the cover on your last issue (15 November)? You couldn't blame them for thinking they had picked up pro-Life propaganda instead of an intelligent read. The cover graphic looked like it had been lifted straight out of the literature used to whip up anti-abortion hysteria.

And to accompany such a well thought out, reasoned article by Julia South with anti-abortion slogans was an insult. We hope that this was careless action rather than deliberate provocation.

We welcome coverage of the abortion issue but do expect more sensitive presentation.

Profit from plastic bullets

Rosa Meehan, United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets, Dublin, Eire

We note with concern the inclusion in your magazine of a quarter page advertisement for Brocks Ltd (*NS* 1 November). This company not only makes fireworks but also the lethal and brutal plastic bullet. This company which purports to bring joy to your readers does so on the lives of 12 people killed by these bullets and by maiming and injuring countless others over the last 12 years.

By the end of 1975 3,556 plastic bullets had been fired in Northern Ireland and taken the life of Stephen Gennis aged 10. Since that time 11 others have been murdered, half of them children. These bullets are fired in non riot situations.

The responsibility to have these products stopped lies with us all and that includes the closing of Brocks Factory while they make these lethal weapons. We ask you and your readers to isolate Brocks.

On the 7th day — they worked

Erica Smith, Selly Oak, Birmingham

What ignorance of the plight of tens of thousands of shop workers Rob Edwards (*NS* 15 November) reveals in his article on Sunday shopping. The fact that 'staff will suffer' is dismissed without a comment. Could it be possible that he has never worked in a shop or even met a shop worker?

The fact of the matter is that if the Sunday shopping restrictions are lifted, shop staff will be *forced* to work on Sundays. Although some of the basic shop floor work may be covered by Sunday only staff, there will be a need for supervisory and management staff to cover Sundays. For these staff, Sunday is at present the only day most of them see their spouses and children. They are already usually working days of 7.30 am-6 pm during the week; working hours that are, perhaps unknown to *NS* journalists and probably most *NS* readers.

So when people like Rob Edwards gain the 'freedom' of being able to wander down to their local supermarket on a Sunday for a bottle of wine because they couldn't manage to get there during the 70 hours trading in the rest of the week, perhaps they will reflect on what that freedom is doing to the home life of the staff who serve them.

Such a lot of bottle

Lois Miles, Health Visitor, Tameside, Greater Manchester

Health Visitors are not complacent about the commercial pressures which baby milk manufacturers bring to bear on us (*NS* 15 November). The HVs who work with me in an inner city clinic strongly advocate breast feeding in our ante natal classes, child welfare clinics and during home visits and we encourage contacts with breast feeding groups. However a high percentage of mothers, for personal reasons, decide to bottle feed their babies. Are we to tell them that their decision is completely misguided and withdraw our support?

The supplies of baby milk which the reps leave in clinics are given out to mothers who ask for them, either because their milk tokens have not arrived from the DHSS or because they have run short of milk for their babies. I am aware of two Health Authorities in the NW Region which do not allow reps into the clinics. This decision was taken by the Directors of Nursing Services, Community and is a giant step in the right direction. But mothers (and HVs) still lack impartial information about baby milk to enable them to make an informed choice. This gap should be filled by literature from the Health Education Council. The choice of which milk to give would be made easier if we had a government-produced modified baby milk for sale in clinics.

No bias, surely?

John Gretton, Policy Journals, Hermitage, Berkshire

It is a pity that Phillip Whitehead appears to have bowed to pressure from the Glasgow University Media Group in the interval between writing his *Sunday Times* piece (3 November) and his article in *New Statesman* (15 November), on Martin

Take me to your leader
by Moanin' Minnie
STOP!
WE'LL SOON SEE IF YOU ARE A FLOWER OR AN EGG
NOW LOOK, OF COURSE I LOATHE AND ABHOR EVERYTHING THIS FLOWER STANDS FOR, BUT—
LOATHE
ABHOR
LOATHE
IT'S AN EGG
WHATEVER YOU THINK IT IS, THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR RESORTING TO THE VIOLENCE OF THE EGGSPOON!
JOHN MINNION
BESIDES, IT'S VERY GOOD IN PARTS

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Harrison's book *TV News: Whose Bias?* Rather than slighting and sneering at the author, ITN, and the publishers, he would have performed a better service to your readers if he had concentrated on the actual argument. Has Martin Harrison made his case? Are there substantive arguments to be put in favour of the Glasgow University Media Group which he has ignored?

Certainly, we would all be gainers if radio and television broadcasters did open their doors consistently. But credit where credit is due. ITN *has* opened its doors in this instance, and the transcripts that Harrison argues from are all laid out in his book for everyone — including Phillip Whitehead and the Glasgow University Media Group — to examine in detail.

No shibboleth of the Left

Unity Johnson, London E12

With reference to John Hartman's letter on museum charges (15 November), schools can no longer afford books or hospitals afford cleaners because that is government policy. The government can afford Trident, fortress Falklands, tax cuts and mortgage relief for higher earners.

Free entry for all at our museums and galleries is something to be proud of. What other countries do is up to them. Why should the unemployed, pensioners and the poor always have to declare their circumstances in order to visit national collections paid for from taxes or given or lent for the enjoyment of all regardless of wealth?

Free museums are not just a shibboleth of the Left. Many conservatives did not agree with charges in the Heath era, including Jeffrey Archer.

Gillick's friends

Madelaine Simms, London NW11

Is Andrew Cotton (Letters, 15 November) having us on?

The House of Lords has ruled in the Gillick case that girls under 16 can give valid consent to contraceptive treatment if they have 'sufficient understanding and intelligence' to know what it involves. This, Mr Cotton solemnly assures us, means: 'The medical profession now has unfettered freedom to interfere in the running of working-class family structure'.

What it actually means is that girls under 16 who are having sex can obtain sensible contraceptive advice in private, even if their 'family structure' (sic) would deny it them — whatever their class.

Mr Cotton then says that Mrs Gillick lacked support from the Tories and the Church. In fact, she had almost unanimous support in parliament from the extreme Right. Cardinal Hume strongly supported her 'moral stand' while disagreeing with her recourse to the courts, recognising that it would do the Church no good if she lost, and give vast publicity to under 16s that they could now seek expert birth control advice. Too late, though, for the 33 girls in Camberwell, compared with only 11 last year, who became pregnant during the 10 months when Mrs Gillick was fooling around.

New but not unnoticed

John Murray, Panurge, *Cumbria*

David Berry's literary magazines review (*NS* 15 November) was an atrocious piece of non-criticism. These two or three line whistle-stop notices of paperbacks and magazines are a pointless feature of a magazine that could once have held its head up beside the *London Review Of Books, London Magazine* and other painstaking journals.

As far as our own magazine *Panurge* goes, Berry's snide remark that our 'new' (his pejorative quotes) authors should give up before they do themselves permanent damage might be partly countered by the following: Two of our authors have got themselves leading literary agents as a result of getting in *Panurge*; one woman writer has been approached direct by a major fiction house after making her debut with us.

If Berry had bothered to look along our contributor's column he would have seen that a goodly number of the contributors have already published in *London Magazine, Stand, Irish Press* etc, so cannot entirely be the witless novices he would make them out.

Even acknowledging his doubtless hard-won conviction that prior political concern often leads to a better writing he need only have read the Cossery story (about Cairo beggary) or the Mullan (about Ulster sectarianism) to have found what he wanted.

G.K. Chesterton

Michael Coren, Flat 11, 92-94 Great Titchfield Street, London W1

I am writing a biography of G.K. Chesterton for Jonathan Cape. If anybody has personal or family reminiscences or previously unrecorded anecdotes about him I would like to hear from them.

FEEDBACK

Get off the Geneva rug

IN HIS ARTICLE about CND and NATO (*NS* 15 November), Edward Thompson outlines a scenario for a Reagan or Bush response to unilateral British measures against cruise missiles and US air bases. There are other equally likely scenarios for such situations which could present other difficulties to the peace movement.

As Thompson says, America is not a monolith. And it is quite possible that by the time there is a Labour government in Britain, there will be a liberal Democratic president in the US.

Even if there weren't, removal of cruise might raise no objections from the Americans, many of whom have seen both cruise and Pershing 2 as responses to European demands. Even Mr Richard Perle, arch-hawk of the Reagan eyrie, has described the decision to deploy cruise and Pershing 2 as a mistake and Dr Kissinger once said 'To the extent that intermediate-range weapons are needed . . . at all, they can be deployed in various modes at sea'.

The point is that cruise and Pershing 2 are of political, not of military significance. Those who deny this cannot explain the recent US proposal to eliminate most of the Pershing 2s (down from 108 to 36) and reduce the numbers of cruise (from 464 to 404) in exchange for a comparable reduction of Soviet SS-20 deployments. With this offer on the table it is evident that even the Reagan Administration regards the weapons as bargaining chips. Much the same applies to British Trident.

I do not suggest that any of this could be done without consultation or papering over the cracks. It seems to me that in the course of a disarmament process even British withdrawal from NATO could become acceptable to the Americans. It is the process which is crucial.

One can easily imagine a series of steps, such as those outlined by the Alternative Disarmament Commission in their 1983 report 'Defence without the Bomb', leading to a nuclear-free NATO. These steps were (1) the acceptance by NATO of a no-first-use of nuclear weapons policy; (2) a phased but total withdrawal of all battlefield nuclear weapons; (3) removal of all US 'theatre' nuclear weapons; (4) decoupling NATO from the US nuclear deterrent. After all that, the significance of a withdrawal from NATO would be quite other than it is now.

CND should be wary of concentrating too much on acceptable demands. An agreement on arms cuts at Geneva (or at Geneva 2 or Geneva 3) could pull the rug from under its feet. History gives a warning: in *Left, Left, Left,* her autobiographical account of CND and other protest campaigns, Peggy Duff described how changes which had come about in CND of the '50s 'were not strong enough to offset the impact of the Test Ban Treaty'.

The dangers of a replay are apparent. Paul Nitze, Reagan's special adviser on disarmament, recently recalled a study made in the '50s which came to the conclusion that 500 warheads on each side would be 'enough' for mutual deterrence. What would be the situation for CND if cuts to anywhere near that level came about at Geneva?

Duff specified 'three reasons why CND failed . . . to achieve any of its main objectives . . .' Two of these are relevant to the present argument. Many people in CND wanted it both ways: to operate both inside and outside conventional politics; to remain inside the system and to destroy it. Secondly, CND not only had no ideology to sustain it, but very little hard political content even to its short-term aims. What little existed was distrusted by many in the movement whose interest and concern was ethically based, who saw all politics as nasty and dirty.

Duff's second point brings me to a significant omission from Thompson's article. It doesn't mention capitalism. In discussing strategy or tactics for the peace movement shouldn't one examine the dynamics of the arms race? Shouldn't one consider it in terms of competition between nation-states, in the same way that capitalism can be understood in terms of competition between individual entrepreneurs?

In the West, arms production serves as the substitute market which stimulates a resumption of capital accumulation. The East, for unsurprising reasons, and with different perceptions of the nature of nuclear weapons, tries to keep up. In the run-up to Geneva, all the signs have been that the Soviet leadership finds the arms race a burden, which with the addition of SDI could become intolerable, while some US officials have been making it clear that they see it as a form of economic warfare. Thompson suggests more symmetry of motive and method between the two sides than the evidence supports.

If I might steal a structure from Simone de Beauvoir, I should say that 'There can be no socialism without nuclear disarmament, and no nuclear disarmament without socialism'. CND has still to develop the 'hard political content' which Peggy Duffy found wanting.

Felix Pirani

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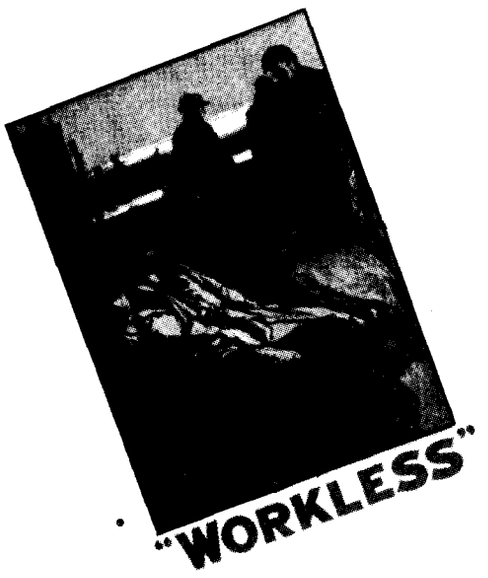

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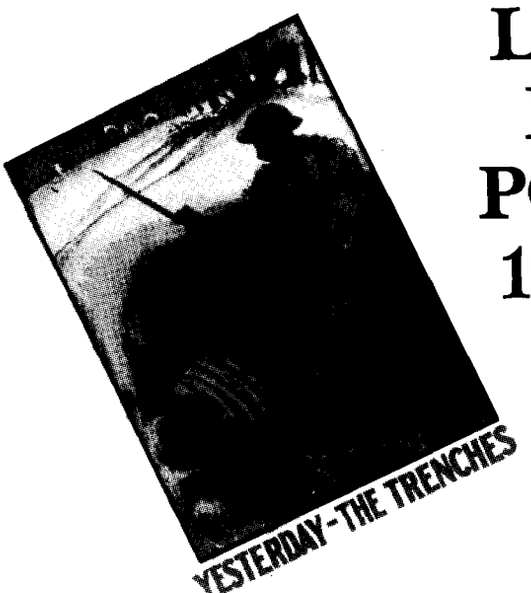

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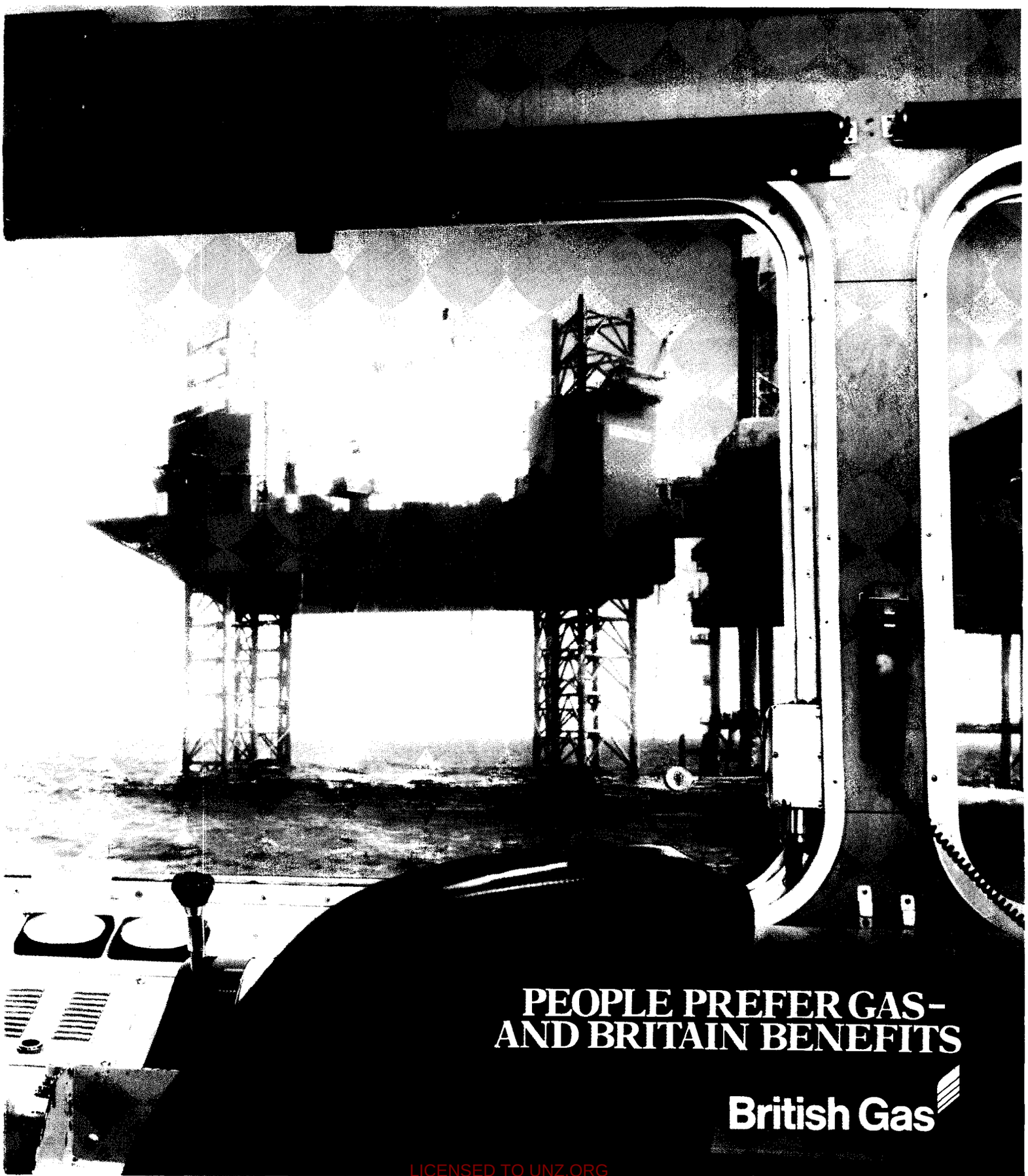

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Robin Collingwood

ORIGIN OF THE SPECIOUS

More than any other scientific theory, at least since Ptolemy's hypothesis of the geocentric universe — co-opted and ultimately enforced by the Church — the theory of evolution has been distorted by 'melodramas', using it to propel unbalanced world-pictures. In an extract from Evolution as a Religion, *published this week by Methuen, MARY MIDGLEY describes how it is the myths, 'Spencerian' or 'Panglossian', and not real biological theory, which have associated our evolutionary origins with injustice and oppression*

There is grandeur in this view of life.
Charles Darwin

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION is not just an inert piece of theoretical science. It is, and cannot help being, also a powerful folk-tale about human origins.

Any such narrative must have symbolic force. We are probably the first culture not to make that its main function. Most stories about human origins must have been devised purely with a view to symbolic and poetic fittingness. Suggestions about how we were made and where we come from are bound to engage our imagination, to shape our views of what we now are, and so to affect our lives. Scientists, when they find themselves caught up in those webs of symbolism, sometimes complain, calling for a sanitary cordon to keep them away from science. But this seems to be both psychologically and logically impossible.

Our theoretical curiosity simply is not detached in this way from the rest of our life. Nor do scientists themselves always want it to be so. Some of the symbolic webs are ones which they approve of, and promote as part of the ideal of science itself. For instance, Jacques Monod, as an atheistical biochemist, does not just rejoice at getting rid of the theistic drama. He at once replaces it by another drama, just as vivid, emotive and relevant to life, in which Sartrian man appears as the lonely hero challenging an alien and meaningless universe:

> It is perfectly true that science attacks values. Not directly, since science is no judge of them and *must* ignore them; but it

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> subverts every one of the mythical or philosophical ontogenies upon which the animist tradition, from the Australian aborigines to the dialectical materialists, have based morality, values, duties, rights, prohibitions.
>
> If he accepts this message in its full significance, man must at last wake out of his millenary dream and discover his total solitude, his fundamental isolation. He must realize that, like a gypsy, he lives on the boundary of an alien world; a world that is deaf to his music, and as indifferent to his hopes as it is to his sufferings or his crimes.

But 'discovering his total solitude' is just adopting one imaginative stance among many possible ones. Other good scientists, very differently, have used the continuity of our species with the rest of the physical world to reprove human arrogance and to call for practical recognition of kinship with other creatures. Many, like Darwin and the great geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky, have held that an attitude of awe and veneration for the wonders of the physical world is an essential condition for studying them properly.

It seems often to be assumed that science itself is something so pure and impersonal that it ought to be thought of in complete abstraction from all the motives that might lead people to practise it. This, unfortunately, cannot work because of the importance of world-pictures. Facts are not gathered in a vacuum, but to fill gaps in a world-picture which already exists. And the shape of this world-picture — determining the matters allowed for it, the principles of selection, the possible range of emphases — depends deeply on the motives for forming it in the first place.

Imagination, which guides thought, is directed by our attitudes. For instance, predatory and competitive motives tend to produce a picture dominated by competition and predation — one in which these elements do not only play their part, as they did for Darwin, but are arbitrarily and dogmatically isolated as sole rulers. Thus, in a familiar distortion, the sociobiologist M. T. Ghiselin flatly declares:

> The evolution of society fits the Darwinian paradigm in its most individualistic form. The economy of nature is competitive from beginning to end. Understand that economy, and how it works, and the underlying reasons for social phenomena are manifest. They are the means by which one organism gains some advantage to the detriment of another. No hint of genuine charity ameliorates our vision of society, once sentimentalism has been laid aside. What passes for co-operation turns out to be a mixture of opportunism and exploitation. The impulses that lead one animal to sacrifice himself for another turn out to have their ultimate rationale in gaining advantage over a third, and acts for the good of one 'society' turn out to be performed for the detriment of the rest.
>
> Where it is in his own interest, every organism may reasonably be expected to aid his fellows. Where he has no alternative, he submits to the yoke of servitude. Yet, given a full chance to act in his own interest, nothing but expediency will restrain him from brutalizing, from maiming, from murdering — his brother, his mate, his parent, or his child. Scratch an 'altruist' and watch a 'hypocrite' bleed.

This claim is essentially pure fantasy, not only unsupported by the empirical facts which are supposed to be its grounds, but actually contrary to them, such as they are. Is this a quite exceptional aberration? Some will suspect that it must be, not only because the world-picture involved is a bad one, but because scientists ought to be so impartial that they either do not have anything so unprofessional as a world-picture at all, or, if they have one, do not let it affect their work.

But this is a mistaken ideal. An enquirer with no such general map would only be an obsessive — someone who had a special motive for collecting facts indiscriminately. He would not be a person without an attitude, or without special motives, but one with motives so odd as to inhibit the kind of organizing activity which normally shapes people's ideas into some sort of coherent whole. Merely to pile up information indiscriminately is an idiot's task. Good scientists do not approximate to that ideal at all. They tend to have a very strong guiding imaginative system. Their world-picture is usually a positive and distinctive one, with its own special drama. They do not scrupulously avoid conveying any sense of dark and light, of what matters and what does not, of what is to be aimed at and what avoided at all costs. They use the lights and shadows to reveal the landscape. Like those who argue usefully on any other subject, they do their best work not by being neutral but by having strong preferences, being aware of them, criticizing them carefully, expressing them plainly and then leaving their readers to decide how far to share them.

SYMBOLISM, then, is not just a nuisance to be got rid of. It is essential. Facts will never appear to us as brute and meaningless; they will always organize themselves into some sort of story, some drama. These dramas can indeed be dangerous. They can distort our theories, and they have distorted the theory of evolution perhaps more than any other. The only way in which we can control this kind of distortion is, I believe, to bring the dramas themselves out into the open, to give them our full attention, understand them better and see what part, if any, each of them ought to play both in theory and in life. It is no use merely to swipe at them from time to time, like troublesome insects, while officially attending only to the theoretical questions. This will not make them go away, because they are a serious feature of life.

When the young Darwin immersed himself in the arguments about cosmic purpose in Paley's theological textbook *The Evidence of Christianity,* and repeatedly read *Paradise Lost* on exploring trips from the *Beagle,* he was neither wasting his time nor distorting his scientific project. He was seriously working his way through a range of life-positions which lay on the route to the one he could finally use.

The result of this long preliminary pilgrimage was to make his own picture unusually balanced and inclusive. To keep it so is, however, terribly hard. He himself made clear that he felt this difficulty deeply, and was constantly dissatisfied with his efforts, constantly changing his books to do justice to some neglected angle.

The vastness of the truth and the one-sidedness of formulae always haunted him. This haunting by no means reduced his work to an undramatic neutrality. Instead, the tension of opposites makes the drama which he shows us comprehensive and Shakespearian, so that it includes every mood. Gillian Beer has lately pointed out how rich his style is in fertile metaphors and models, which he continually uses to supplement and correct each other. Centrally, he will not lose hold of either of the two emotional responses which belong most naturally to evolutionary speculation — on the other hand, optimistic, joyful wonder at the profusion of nature, and on the other, pessimistic, sombre alarm at its wasteful cruelty. Since he cannot qualify every sentence, selective quotation often makes him seem enslaved to one or other of these attitudes. And others who have made real efforts to come to terms with the conflict have been misrepresented in the same sort of way.

Since this vast issue involves our whole view of our place in the world, discussion of it calls out and reflects the whole shape of the character. What is needed is the kind of effort which Darwin made to become aware of them, to separate them from the more narrowly factual issues, and to watch out for their dangers.

About evolution, theory itself has again and again been distorted by biases flowing from over-simple, unbalanced world-pictures. Two distortions stand out. Neither is new; both have often been denounced. But both persist, not just in the minds of outsiders ignorant of evolutionary theory, but also in those of scientists who develop and expound it.

The first is the better known and the more obviously pernicious. It is the 'Social Darwinist' idea, expressed by Ghiselin, that life has been scientifically proved to be essentially competitive, in some sense

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which exposes all social feeling as somehow mere humbug and illusion. The phrase 'survival of the fittest' has been used, ever since Herbert Spencer first coined it, to describe an individualistic law showing such things as co-operation, love and altruism to be unreal, a law which (somewhat mysteriously) both demands and predicts that they should always give way to self-interest.

This has often been exposed as nonsense. Since many very successful species of social animals, including our own, have evolved these traits, have survived by them and continue to live by them, their unreality cannot be the message of evolutionary theory. But because of its strong dramatic force, as well as various political uses, this notion persists through repeated attempts to correct it, and often twists up the ideas even of those who think they are helping to get rid of it. It is especially troublesome in the American sociobiology debate.

The second main distortion may be called Panglossism, or the Escalator Fallacy. It is the idea that evolution is a steady, linear upward movement, a single inexorable process of improvement, leading (as a disciple of Herbert Spencer's put it) 'from gas to genius' and beyond into some superhuman spiritual stratosphere. This idea, first put forward by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck at the beginning of the century, convinced Spencer instantly and completely. It did not convince Darwin at all. He thought it vacuous, pointed out the obscurity of the metaphor 'higher', and relied on no such paid-up cosmic insurance policy to bail out the human race.

He developed his own view of selection on the humbler model of a bush — a rich radiation of varying forms, in which human qualities cannot, any more than any others, determine a general direction for the whole.

MELODRAMAS like these, especially the 'Social Darwinist' or Spencerist one, account, I am sure, for the strong objection which many people still feel to seriously taking the theory of evolution on board at all. This objection is not confined to Biblical creationists. Certainly the persistence of creationism, leading to a recent expansion and even the conversion of a few physical scientists, itself indicates something beyond mere passive conservatism.

But what is much more interesting and important is the subtler resistance still common among social scientists. This is not a denial of evolutionary theory itself, which is usually conceded as correct in its own sphere, but a steady rejection of any attempt to use it in the interpretation of human affairs. A sanitary cordon is erected at the frontier between the physical and social sciences, at which biological explanations generally and evolutionary ones in particular still tend to be turned back, marked with an official stamp which may read 'Fascist', 'Racist', 'Galtonist', 'Innatist', 'Biological Determinist', or, most grimly of all, merely 'Biological'.

This habit is fortunately on the way out, and a modest two-way traffic does now go on, to the general advantage. But a good deal of work is still needed to explain — as is always necessary in these cases — the distortions which give rise to the prejudice in the first place, and just why they are not actually part of biological science.

Tribally speaking, this debate is conceived as a border dispute between social scientists and biologists. It can appear to be one between their respective sciences themselves. Since, however, sciences cannot oppose each other in this way, there is plainly a need for rethinking and restatement. Disputes about the sources of human conduct have often been somewhat aggressively and competitively conducted. Physical explanations have chronically been seen as competing with psychological ones, introspection as competing with laboratory work, observation with experiment, interest in heredity with interest in environment, history with science, and answers to large questions with answers to small ones.

In this competitive atmosphere, the standing of biological explanations was much injured by their repeated misuse during the last century for sinister political purposes. Starting from Francis Galton's eugenic proposals to weed out the lower classes, as well as non-European races, by selective breeding, oppressors repeatedly invoked the name and prestige of biology, along with Social Darwinist distortions of evolutionary theory, to justify exploitation.

The notion of fitness was twisted to preserve white dominance in the United States through so-called intelligence testing, bolstered by false, but seductive, biological theories. It also figured in the ravings of the Nazis. Thus biology itself became associated in the public mind with a string of indefensible right-wing positions. Since these people's biological theories were usually false, based on views of (for instance) race which were not biological at all, this hijacking ought no more to have discredited genuine biology than the errors of alchemists discredit chemistry.

Natural, inborn human spontaneity, seeking a more-satisfying life even among people who have been brutally conditioned to know nothing but slavery, is the source of resistance to tyranny. It is the myths, not real biological theory, which have associated our evolutionary origins with injustice and oppression. That is why it is so important to expose them. □

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Changes of tune in China

Jonathan Mirsky

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STUART R. SCHRAM *Contemporary China Institute, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* £5.

Below: schoolchildren in Xiamon, S.E. China — only one allowed for each family and boys most desired.

Right: Deng Xiaoping

Camera Press

Steve Benbow, Network

KNOWING WHAT'S HAPPENING in China is like one of those Oxford Street guessing games; you're sure at the moment where the pea is but soon it turns out to be under quite a different shell. During the Cultural Revolution, for instance, the Dazhai commune was regularly held up as a model of communal endeavour; its peasants told — literally — millions of visitors how much better life was working in groups. Now the same peasants say with equal firmness how miserable they were then. Or again, after Deng Xiaoping's rural policies went into effect in 1979, the official press ran many stories about Rich Peasants. Now we learn from the same source that most peasants are still very poor, their incomes regularly inflated by cadres desperate to make a good impression with their superiors; orders have been issued recently to stop exacting fees from farmers that remind them of the exploitive periods of pre-Communist rule.

In these three books, leading China specialists have ventured into this thicket of claims, withdrawals and counter-claims, and, although their excellent studies of administration, family planning and ideology run up to last year, they already stand in need of revision.

Doak Barnett, doyen of American students of Chinese administration and now author of **The Making of Foreign Policy in China** has secured a notable scoop. For 35 years after the Communist victory almost nothing was known about how China was ruled: the *nomenklatura*, the apparatus, who took what responsibility for carrying out policies which by contrast were widely aired. On 19 July, in Peking, Premier Zhao Ziyang gave Barnett the outline, which he filled in, although still only sketchily, with other interviews during his fruitful Chinese visit. What Zhao made clear to Barnett is that a shift has occurred in ruling procedure and practice: the politburo and its super-elite six-man standing committee, consisting of Deng Xiaoping, President Li Xiannian, Premier Zhao, Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang, Deng's major critic the veteran economist Chen Yun and the moribund Marshal Ye Jianning (since resigned), no longer make grand policy or administrate. These tasks are now performed by the Party Secretariat and the 'inner cabinet' of the State Council, some of whose members — but only Deng's allies wherever possible — are drawn partially from the politburo, but they are mostly the younger, supposedly better qualified men (and a women or two) whom Deng has selected to lead China into the 21st century. (Barnett supplies convenient pocket profiles of some of these high-flyers, who are too new to be included in standard guides.)

Of course Deng, who holds none of the very highest State offices, remains the paramount leader, although unlike Mao he slowly assembles coalitions and permits his adversaries a soft landing into retirement complete with car and house.

Deng's main disciple, Premier Zhao, puts it this way: 'As all people know, major issues are determined with the participation of Comrade Deng Xiaoping...not because of his position but because of his rich experience, wisdom and prestige.' Barnett says flatly that most major decisions are made by Deng.

In foreign policy matters, Deng is especially important. Sir Geoffrey Howe and Ronald Reagan found that Deng alone could take decisions without having to wait a day for consultations. Nonetheless, he and the other top leaders are advised by subordinate groups, often made up of specialists, who serve the boards, groups and desks in the Foreign Ministry. Barnett says, however, that whereas in the West only specialists and researchers study foreign newspaper reports which might interest their masters, in China the leadership itself reads 'raw data' supplied to it in great heaps twice daily, sometimes in especially large print for the elderly.

Barnett will need to revise his second edition — although he modestly describes this thin volume as merely a 1984 snapshot. In 1984 he was told in Peking that China is balancing itself between the two superpowers. In the spring of this year, Premier Zhao explained in London that China was indeed independent of Moscow and Washington, but 'not equidistant'. Peking has tilted towards the US.

Then there are all those bright 'youthful' new leaders, recently helicoptered up to the top by Deng, in place of veterans he no longer found useful for his reforms. In a recent *People's Daily* a slightly coded analogy has appeared warning the current leadership that in 1898 similar sweeping reforms foundered when the reformers moved too fast and alienated their supporters. The reformers were decapitated. Such warnings were not appearing in Chinese newspapers in July 1984.

Rethinking is occurring, too, in family planning, or more specifically, one-child-family planning. According to Elisabeth Croll of Wolfson College, Britain's expert on this vital issue, writing in **China's One-Child Family Policy** 'the single-child family has been deemed the most unpopular policy introduced in China over the past five years'. Hardly a day passes without the official press defending China against charges of brutal abortions and infanticide, largely because the right-to-lifers in the US are withholding millions of dollars from the UN to ensure that no American money is spent on Chinese population limitation. Indeed, as Delia Davin says in her chapter in this authoritative book, 'Millions of women undergo abortions they would prefer not to have.' Davin has rounded up as well the disagreeable evidence of female infanticide by

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Chinese peasants who grudgingly agree to rear only one child but are determined that he shall be male.

The book's main conclusion is that 80 per cent of China's population — the peasantry — are at best unenthusiastic about the one-child policy, which is now in its sixth year, because it makes little economic sense. To rural folk more hands around the farm mean more money. Subtle pulling back is beginning. One-fifth of the peasants around Shanghai, for instance, have been given permission to have a second child.

Stuart Schram of London's School of Oriental and African Studies is already the leading western Mao-expert. Now in **Ideology and Policy in China since the Third Plenum 1978-84**, he has turned his mind to post-Mao changes in ideology, which unlike the frenzies of the Chairman's last 15 years he regards as realistic. But, even though the new policies are unleashing high-voltage entrepreneurial energy in the countryside, Schram notes, ideological conformity and discipline are still demanded by some of the leadership when they deal with intellectuals. Schram obtained his Peking scoop, too. He interviewed some of the hardliners and some of their critics. Each group was guarded and Schram is somewhat at a loss to know what position Deng himself takes in the struggle over ideological relaxation. The situation is made murkier, he notes, because the Chinese have been so deeply marked by campaigns against this or that target that they will obediently climb on the next bandwagon to demonstrate their loyalty. Even Deng must exhibit his patriotism. He apparently threw the Democracy Wall dissidents to the wolves in 1979 in order to show his adversaries how tough he is...even though what the dissidents were saying was not particularly subversive.

Schram does not believe that what is developing now in China is disguised capitalism. It is, as the Chinese say, 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' — which Schram says includes the traditional Chinese belief that the State must guarantee general well-being. Only two months ago, therefore, something happened that Schram could not foresee. In late September Standing Committee Member Chen Yun, whose Party credentials are as pure as Deng's, warned that Dengism could be leading to economic disaster and was certainly stimulating corruption at the highest levels. A month later the *People's Daily* issued its caution about the 1898 reforms.

Barnett, Croll, Davin, Kane and Schram can get going on their up-dates. In the meantime, of course, the pea will have appeared under yet another shell. □

Stuff of dreams

Robert del Quiaro

Big Deal: The Politics of the Illicit Drugs Business
ANTHONY HENMAN and others *Pluto* £4.50
Heroin: Chasing the Dragon
JUSTINE PICARDIE and DOROTHY WADE
Penguin £2.50

HEROIN IS SO GOOD that you should never try it, said Lenny Bruce. You are as though satisfied and in your mother's arms. There can never — under capitalism — be anything like it.

Drugs facilitate artistry, reverie, ecstasy, fray the bonds that have us working for money and paying taxes for it. So of course capital and the state make war on them. But drugs are a commodity, the profits huge, so the war is no simple assault.

Big Deal offers lots of information and polemic about the business, in five sections by different authors. The parts on heroin, the style and spending of young British drug users, and on the social control of women through pharmacology are too short and not well enough assembled to give more than hints of what has been going on. (However, Roger Lewis points usefully to the matching attitudes of Gaullists and the Mafia towards heroin as a fact of life to be exploited for hegemony and profit.)

The two outstanding chapters, which make the book well worth buying, show the damage the US does across the world as it tries to zap poppies, weed, coca bushes and associated cultivators and traffickers of those drugs arbitrarily deemed illicit. This concentration on stopping the supply rather than educating away the demand requires the pen of a Thoreau, but Tim Malyon, on cannabis, being the only contributor who writes with consistent fluency and economy, will do for now.

Anthony Henman emphasises that the effort in South America to eradicate the coca leaf — which people chew to ward off cold and hunger, and to 'remember the ancients' at tribal gatherings — so as to combat cocaine is imperialist terrorism on the part of the US. He also gives a stimulating account of the informal and powerful 'narcocracy' on the rise in the Andean countries, where society at all levels is being changed by the cocaine trade — financing senators and creating new wealth and migration in the countryside. We also learn that some states are figuring out that they are being 'sold a treadmill' when the US harnesses them to the war on drugs, and that the next weapon in that campaign is to be biological. With Brazilian help, the US Drug Enforcement Administration is cooking up insects, fungi and so on that will attack only the coca bush — it hopes.

The other book reads like a worthy try at warming up old *Sunday Times* Insight files and is accordingly dull. Whatever happened to Penguin Specials worthy of the name — that had passion, flair, illumination, even indices? The moral of the book: Don't shoot up but, if you do, make sure you have rich parents/friends with all the patience in the world.

It was diverting to see, in *Big Deal*, Henman come out of pseudonymity as the author of *Mama Coca*, which can be hard to find although the police have nabbed a few copies over the years. Now *there's* a drugs book. □

A shot of B12

Justin Wintle

The Everyman History of English Literature
PETER CONRAD *Dent* £16

THERE IS A NEW, and some would say rather alarming, tendency among publishers to call a spade anything but a spade. Despite its chronological framework, thus marking it down as a diachronic project and therefore of scant interest to structuralists and their successors, Peter Conrad's *The Everyman History of English Literature* is not what its title portends. It is neither particularly descriptive nor particularly encyclopaedic. Rather it is a study of, a lengthy essay upon, the English Imagination as witnessed in a more or less conventional and narrow selection of major works with a distinct bias toward the poetic. In the Conradian scheme of things English prose is of very little account until the emergence of the novel at the hands of Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. Robert Burton and Thomas Browne are passingly subsumed under Donne (which is underdone indeed!), and of Hakluyt (for example) there is no mention at all.

There are further restraints which Conrad willingly submits to. He eschews the polemical and the ismatic alike. Literature as a vehicle for non-imaginative pursuits, or as the receptacle of intellectual currents, is inadmissible. Cobbett is conspicuous by his missingness, Orwell is

Idries Shah
"Food for many different kinds of study – a book unlike anything our own society has produced . . . in its richness, its unexpectedness and its capacity to shock us into seeing ourselves as others see us, both personally and as a society." 'Literary Review'
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Octagon Press Ltd., PO Box 227, London. N6 4EW.
Hardback £8.50

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scarcely more than a red herring, while a figure of such general importance to an understanding of the 17th-century ferment as St Augustine (to name but one) is also neglected. Instead Conrad elects to see our literature as a virtual automony, and his appreciation is as much a specimen of it as it is its portrait. Whereas the common run of general surveys and grand histories depend upon a style that always approximates to the mandarin, Conrad uses a moister prose that is altogether more promiscuous. His paragraphs, which are not always easy to read, are packed with allusions, images and metonyms. Rather than clarify literary history he enters into cornucopial collusion with it.

This immediately disqualifies *The Everyman History of English Literature* from belonging in any sense to the beginner's guide category. Nor is it in the intermediate class. A familiarity with the texts he reveals rather than discusses is a precondition for the reader's understanding of what Conrad is about. This sets him at an immediate disadvantage, because anyone as well acquainted with his subject as he is bound, if only because of sheer labours spent, to have formulated views and opinions that differ (and it is hard to see that very much more than views and opinions is on offer). But these caveats aside, the author's vision does command respect and in the end admiration too. For all that in tone Conrad disgorges himself in a sort of after-dinner brilliance, the effect is not unlike a generous shot of Vitamin B12 afore breakfast.

He begins by taking a large swallow from the mead-cup of *Beowulf*, and remains intoxicated for the next 700 pages, or 1,200 years. He is adamant that the epic precedes all else and that thereafter it is a matter of English Literature, English Imagination, finding its own eccentric way despite attempted interferences from without and one major revolt from within. In a mercifully brief chapter on the Anglo-Saxon period just four texts are mentioned (all of them poems): *Beowulf, The Battle of Malden, The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*. Thereafter 'the heroic age is contradicted by the age of chivalry'. Epic is suborned by Romance. And why not? 'Epic,' Conrad writes, 'is about what is necessary to us: shelter, safety. Romance describes a world of surfeit and surplus.'

It is this second provenance that makes possible all that is of value in what comes after. It is Chaucer who contains all the seeds of future growth. But more than Chaucer it is Chaucer's own creation, the Wife of Bath, who epitomises 'the protest of experience against authority', and among whose true progeny are Sterne and Dickens. 'Creative allowance and abundance' are the two great goods in Conrad's reverie, and after Chaucer the next flowering is in 'Spenser's Garden', where Conrad discovers a 'glad democracy of narrative'. Shakespeare is extolled for resolutely refusing to be trained in the 'segregation' between tragedy and comedy — 'the most important thing about his drama'. With Spenser he keeps English Imagination intact through the Aristotelian onslaught of the Renaissance. Even so, a day of reckoning is ahead. Enter Milton, our greatest poet but also our least typical, our least representative, and in whose hands the epic idea is both resurrected and again perverted. *Paradise Lost* is as much about what is unnecessary for survival and shelter as what is necessary and Milton's universe is 'as much a literary polity as a map of creation'. The dread figure of authority is rekindled: 'In according heroic status to Satan, he accuses heroism of being an infernal mania and a usurpation of God.'

Henceforward, for the next 200 years, English Literature is seen to stage a recovery. The two main counter-attacks are launched by the Romantics and the Novel (which Conrad calls 'a renovation of literature, a return to origins'). Yet these two forces are strangely interlinked. The necessary outcome of Romanticism is, for Conrad, realism, the transition coming in the 'post-coital' dimension of Byron. But, in the novel, its natural habitat, realism can never become the deadweight it threatens. The essential, quickening genius of original Romance is ever-present, ever-available, so that, in the figure of Joyce, we are presented with 'modernism's Chaucer'.

The story goes on through to a period of free fall in which we still find ourselves today. Conrad closes — too schematically — with a notion of disinheritance, affecting equally such disparate figures as Osborne, Bond, Brenton (depicted in the unlikely role of epigone) and even cuddly Tom Stoppard. While some will welcome this extended antidote to the recent antipathy toward value judgments of any kind, others will find Conrad's book an oddly rehearsed, oddly archaic rearguard action in defence of an outmoded syllabus. Perhaps it is even a sort of opera-goer's guide to its subject, but as such it has induced a virtuoso performance from its author, and finally there is as much pleasure in what Conrad achieves as there can be dismay. His *Everyman History of English Literature* is an indulgence, but indulgences may sometimes be granted as well as craved. □

Swifts

Peter Norman

I falter, the bumbling schoolmaster,
as mischievous black darts whizz
about my head. Here in the north
the swift summer cannot last;
you never get used to a clear sky
slashed to ribbons, threshed
out of existence by black sickles.

Years ago, a reluctant cadet,
I learned about aerodynamics
amid the prickle of airforce blue
and the smell of hot stone;
while back and forth, in tight squadrons,
the black devils displayed their arts,
squealing with rage at the earthbound.

Once, because of some gremlin
in its radar system, one dropped
like a soft mouse to the playground;
its tiny face, pinched and whiskered
as a nightjar's, gaped insatiably.
Squeamish in battledress, we couldn't bear
to pick it up. It crawled with lice.

FICTION

In that sleep

Liz Heron

The Assault
HARRY MULISCH *Collins* £8.95
Three Minutes Silence
GEORGII VLADIMOV *Quartet* £9.95
They Sleep Without Dreaming
PENELOPE GILLIATT *Macmillan* £10.95
Birthday Deathday
PADMA PERERA *The Women's Press* £8.95 & £3.95

BY THE END of **The Assault**, the book's opening chapters still stick in the mind, with the obstinacy of a dreadful dream yet to be fully understood. A middle-aged couple and their two young sons huddle in the firelight, the small change of family life their only defence against the fears and hardships of Holland's final months of German occupation. Books and conversation are shared, mending done, a page of Homer translated for school next day, a game of Ludo begun. Rupturing the vivid, sheltered stillness of this scene comes the violence until then held at bay, as a Nazi collaborator is shot and his body dumped at the family's door. Our witness to the violent retribution that ensues is the 12-year-old Anton, who survives the war to grow up with an uncle and aunt.

For the rest of the book we stay with him, through the years into the Eighties; but always at a muffled distance against which the hallucinatory clarity of the wartime episode alone has reality. Anton is like a sleep-walker, unaware that his every action and decision is somehow governed by the events of that night; only gradually allowing himself to remember and to solve the puzzle of what happened when clues to the past intrude on his life.

Yet on the surface this is not a blighted life, its affluence and successes mirroring the social progress that came out of post-war recovery. Anton becomes (a shade too aptly) an anaesthetist; he marries and remarries; fathers children; owns several homes. From within his well-ordered existence he shuns any engagement with politics.

As an exploration of memory and the troubling compulsions of the unconscious, *The Assault* is extraordinarily moving, its skilfully constructed narrative inching backwards to explain the past, as it moves forward. But it also suggests the limits of what can be understood in anything other than the metaphysical dimensions of classical tragedy: chance; the smallness of individual lives beside the clash of armies; the many-sided nature of truth.

It seems less successful on the level where Anton's life itself becomes a metaphor for Western Europe's post-war history, its closing of the door on the trauma of the war while living out its ubiquitous and far-reaching consequences. Whether this is because Mulisch's larger themes are too large for the book's scope, or whether they are just undercut by the apparent resolution of complex political

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questions in a single coalescing image of anti-nuclear protest, I am not certain. But if only for the way in which it broaches these themes it still demands to be read.

Where *The Assault*'s involuted symbolism nudges the reader towards an accumulation of interpretations, **Three Minutes' Silence** beams its message out with disarming simplicity. Drawing on his own experiences in the Arctic fishing fleet, Vladimov gives us an intricately detailed account of life on a Soviet trawler in the North Atlantic in a novel energetically packed with drama.

The rigours and disasters of the voyage are seen through the eager eyes of ordinary seaman Senya, an endearing character who combines genial gullibility with impervious physical toughness and a romantic sensitivity that causes some problems with the women in his life. So vivid are Vladimov's set-piece descriptions: the catch hauled in through an icy gale, the rescue of a Scottish vessel whose SOS has stirred the crew out of their own sense of doom; so touching is its blend of jaunty humour and wistful dreams that one watches the story unfold with all the flowing immediacy of a film — a film that recalls the mood of much Eastern European cinema of more than a decade ago.

If there are sundry sidelong digs at the agents of the Soviet state, in the end Vladimov's humanist sentiments are universally applicable. His sympathies go to all those who believe that generosity and solidarity ultimately redeem us, even if they only rarely prevail against the world's divisions and the self-interest of bosses and bureaucrats. Sentimental and saddening, *Three Minutes' Silence* is also funny and wonderfully cheering.

Both **Birthday Deathday** and **They Sleep Without Dreaming** contain a number of stories previously published in the *New Yorker*. Gilliatt, unlike Perera, is a quintessential *New Yorker* writer: cosmopolitan, urbane, with a delicate enervated wit and a modernistic repertoire of surprises and eccentricities in the cracks of her elliptical narratives. At their best her waspish dialogues are reminiscent of Jane Bowles' writing. In the face of the 'needlessly messy anarchy' several characters complain of, these are desperate and often belated verbal holding operations. Poignant grains of wisdom emerge. Aptly, it's the writers in her stories that seem best equipped to survive.

Gilliatt's stories here are very much of a piece, the malaise of her characters in the spirit of the Eighties, the same words appearing in their mouths. Perera's span a longer period and precise dating might have helped in establishing how her concerns as an Indian writer living in North American have developed. As they stand, the *New Yorker* stories, written in the Seventies, issue from a common vein of nostalgia for a lost India of childhood in which women play a dynastic role and the textures of Brahmin family life are evoked with sensitivity and affection; and with the literary echo of rural America in the background. Beautiful though the writing is, I find these less interesting than the later stories where the nostalgia is no longer elegiac and is more in tension with the present. Some seem to be straining for a longer form, and it is towards the novel that Perera's talent might most fruitfully lead. □

JAZZ

Subversive saxophones

Charles Fox

Hans Kumpf

As distinguished as any in Europe: Vladimir Chekasin of the Ganelin Trio

Russian Jazz: New Identity
ed.LEO FEIGIN *Quartet* £12.95
Con Affetto
THE GANELIN TRIO *Leo LR 137*
Live in Leningrad
ARCHANGELSK *Leo LR 135*
Fortune-Teller
VALENTINA PONOMAREVA *Leo LR 136*

STALIN COULD never be said to have encouraged the spread of Afro-American music. 'Today he plays jazz, tomorrow he'll betray his country' ran one propaganda placard distributed under his regime. 'It's only a step from the saxophone to the knife' declared another. Both allegations presumably date from that period in the late 1940s when the war-time chumminess between Russia and America was being replaced by the chilliness of the Cold War. Saxophones were the first casualty, banned where they were not actually confiscated.

Silliness of that kind was typical of the Soviet Union's constantly shifting attitude towards jazz, its uncertainty about whether to view the music as a bourgeois canker or a people's art. S. Frederick Starr's *Red and Hot*, published a couple of years ago, chronicled that incomprehension with scholarly brilliance. But it left off at the point where jazz itself changed. From being a music dominated by a succession of great American innovators — Armstrong, Parker, Coltrane — whose styles were copied around the world, it turned international, allowing aesthetic rules to be made up by whoever had a set of good ideas.

Internationalism of that sort ends up — paradoxically yet properly — by stressing nationalism, latching on to any nearby tradition which gives colour and a sense of locality to art. That has happened to jazz throughout Europe, not just in Russia. But the unlikeliness of so-called 'free-jazz' spreading throughout the Soviet Union, coupled with the misleading semantic association — aesthetic rearrangement is not the same as a quest for political liberty — meant that the emergence of groups such as the Ganelin Trio acquired a special significance.

That significance is dwelt upon, sometimes too lengthily, in **Russian Jazz: New Identity**, a collection of essays about the latest happenings. The emigré critics tend to be too euphoric, seeing the 1980s and 1990s as decades during which Russian improvisers will lift the whole business to a higher level, reasserting links with avant-gardism of the years just before and immediately after 1917.

More valuable than that sort of speculation is the straightforward reportage, especially the accounts given by visitors. Two Germans (the clarinettist Hans Kumpf, the writer Bert Noglik) and one American (Larry Ochs, who toured the Soviet Union — unofficially — as one-fourth of the ROVA Saxophone Quartet) provide the descriptions of the simple or not so simple matter of getting on stage to perform. (It seems that permission is likely to be withdrawn if an event gets too successful.)

The busiest jazz playing goes on at the westernmost end — in Leningrad and those Baltic states that were taken over by the USSR: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. Moscow seems slightly dour, more likely to come up with Dixieland or a romp through 'C Jam Blues' than with what the contributors to this book usefully, if still ambiguously, refer to as New Jazz. But experiment thrives on the other side of the Urals. Novosibirsk sounds rather like the Kansas City of Siberia, with interesting overlaps between European and Asian cultures.

To be non-political in heavily political surroundings is itself a political action, whether intended or not. Nothing could seem more suspicious. Which may be why the New Jazz is tolerated but not exactly encouraged in the Soviet Union. Typical of the new breed of

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questioning aesthete is Sergey Kuryokhin, an outstanding improviser and composer, a pianist who prefers to play the saxophone. The interview with him is one of the highlights of *Russian Jazz*. Apart from tossing off shrewd critical aperçus ('Rachmaninov's name is associated with a supreme banality and lack of taste, Oscar Peterson is the jazz version of Rachmaninov') he puts forward some refreshing heresies. Black Americans like David Murray and the Art Ensemble of Chicago are, he suggests, backward-looking, not half so genuinely radical as Evan Parker or Derek Bailey. Incidentally, Kuryokhin turns up on an earlier Leo LP (LR 107), *The Ways of Freedom*, and he is the subject of the third programme in BBC-2's TV series, *Comrades* — to be shown on Sunday, 1 December.

There are only a handful of full-time jazz musicians in the Soviet Union. The best known are certainly Vyacheslav Ganelin (keyboards), Vladimir Chekasin (saxophones) and Vladimir Tarasov (percussion), who make up the Ganelin Trio. They specialise in suites, episodic structures — mostly devised by Ganelin — that allow for a variety of methods. Chekasin proffers the most exciting solos, a saxophonist as distinguished as any on the European jazz scene. **Con Affetto** happens to be a particularly good starter for anybody wanting to make the group's acquaintance, a fascinating mixture of style and substance.

Archangelsk is a band that takes its name from the Soviet port at that point where the Dvina river runs into the White Sea. Led by a multi-instrumentalist, Vladimir Reitzsky, it indulges in eclecticism of a kind that has led to comparisons being made with Sun Ra's Solar Arkestra, even with Derek Bailey's Company. Neither comparison really stands up, Archangelsk lacking the identity of the former and never risking the unpredictability that Bailey insists upon. The nine episodes on their LP include a version of 'On The Sunny Side Of The Street', with Reitzsky rasping on his alto saxophone rather as Earl Bostic used to, and a curiously smudged performance of 'Rock Around The Clock'. Far, far better are the austere bits, the piano's dissonances, the toying with gamelan music.

Valentina Ponomareva, a Russian gipsy, starts off with a disastrous, cliché-scatted 'Ain't Misbehavin'.' But her version of 'Michelle' (yes, the Lennon-McCartney number) draws upon a species of ornamentation that must be the Russian equivalent of *cante hondo*. Here and elsewhere are intimations of Cathy Berberian as well as Ursula Dudziak and Karin Krog, but two longish pieces — 'Invocation of Spirit' and 'Spontaneous Composition' — marvellously sustain either the mood or the hectic pace. Aid is given by the fleshy tenor saxophone playing of Anatoly Vapirov, and Sergey Kuryokhin, sticking to the piano. Music like this, and that of the Ganelin Trio, asserts once again the most valuable aspect of jazz, its human scale. Society may be reflected by it but always through the experience of the individual. Nothing, when you think about it, could be more splendidly subversive. □

Charles Fox's radio documentary about Jelly Roll Morton, 'Mister Jelly Lord' is being broadcast on Radio 3 at 7.45 pm on Monday, 25 November.

FILMS

Susan desperately seeking

John Coleman

Plenty (15)
ABCs, Shaftesbury Avenue and Fulham Road
Lost in America (15)
Warner West End
The Boys Next Door (18)
Cannon Premiere; Classic, Oxford Street; from 26 November, ICA

DAVID HARE has talked of 'the loveless English' and this sense of our emotional desiccation, central to so much of his work, expands to include such undesirable national traits as lying (whether through hypocrisy or pragmatism) and stultifying class-consciousness. Yet the other face of his bitterness at us in decline is surely a romanticism that some may find ingenuous. It is these conflicting feelings that go to make the ironically titled **Plenty**, adapted by him from his 1978 stage play and excellently directed by the Australian Fred Schepisi, an experience at once fascinating and maddening, exhilarating and depressing. Though not in every scene, Meryl Streep's self-willed Englishwoman Susan, with her wrecking honesty at any price, dominates the occasion. What seems to spark off her restlessness is expressed in a long opening sequence, somewhere in France, 1943, where as an SOE agent she knows dangerous love for a night with 'Lazar' (Sam Neill), who parachutes down, only to bike off next morning.

This brief encounter is powerfully emblematic of life lived to the full: life heightened because there may be no tomorrow. At the very end of the film, a flashback is to find Susan in a French field on V-E Day, exulting 'There will be days and days and days like this'. Just before, in the early Sixties now, a squalid re-encounter with the Neill character in a seaside hotel room has bought the tacked-on earlier optimism its charge of irony. In between lies the twitching corpse of the body social and political, with Susan now stalking around it, now passively observant, every once in a while doing her damnedest to kick it into life: or to death.

Bored stiff with her job in a shipping office, chumming up with feckless 'bohemian' Alice (Tracey Ullman) who moves in on her, meeting a nice diplomat Raymond (Charles Dance) in Brussels during an awkward, funny, funereal moment, Susan goes her own imperious, demanding, ever-hopeful way. A misty Britain emerges from the war; a jazz-club encounter with young black-marketeer Mick (Sting) has Susan, taking him up as she organises Coronation celebrations, persuading him to give her a child, no strings attached, cruelly dismissing the lovelorn bloke when 18 months produce nothing. After a breakdown, she marries gentle Raymond. Comes Suez and a terrifying dinner-party, at which she constantly assures her guests, most notably Raymond's FO superior Sir Leonard Darwin (John Gielgud), 'no one will say blunder, or folly, or fiasco', unaware that Darwin has just resigned in anger over bad faith. Gielgud is marvellously caustic as well as moving in this sequence, which is a key one: comic, tragic; Susan at her muddled-neurotic worst (and Ms Streep at her dramatic best).

A sedated Susan in Jordan, where her husband has been sent, grabs the chance offered by a visiting Alice and Darwin's death to return to London for his funeral and for good. On the mad war-path again, she calls on Raymond's savagely articulate boss (Ian McKellen), promising to shoot herself if he is not promoted. McKellen's steely, double-edged rejoinder, applying equally to the collapse of empire, 'Behaviour is all', ushers her out.

Mr Hare covers a fair bit of territory in his 20-odd-year scan, elegantly decorated by Richard MacDonald, and strikes some shrewd blows at cynicism's steady displacement of idealism. Streep is never less than compelling in everything she does. What worries me is that this Susan's own ideals (suspect flashback to a parachute and all) are both ill-defined and hugely destructive of others. When Mick and Raymond in turn have their bouts of invective against her, finally breaking away, lashing out, it is hard not to approve of their accuracy. And this may be because Susan's delight in the frank, merry, untethered life-style embodied in Alice's slim role has to bear too much weight: she herself is rather a fraud when it comes to the free-spirit stakes, sniping wickedly from *inside* the comforts of privilege.

Albert Brooks's **Lost in America**, which he co-wrote with Monica Johnson and in which he co-stars with Julie Hagerty, is pleasure unalloyed, a comedy road-movie scoring heavily by starting off with deceptive

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Dim Sun Hong Kong-born Wayne Wang's appealing mosaic portrait (with visual bows to Japanese master Ozu) of Chinese family in freshly observed San Francisco: widowed mother, unmarried daughter, cheery uncle. Touching, humorous, astringent, a young director's invitation to 'only connect'.

Prizzi's Honour With genial fidelity to Richard Condon's triple-cross comedy of mafioso manners, veteran John Huston keeps it in *his* 'family' as daughter Anjelica pops wickedly up to net Jack Nicholson's bemused killer, love-torn Charley, from a killing new wife (Kathleen Turner).

My Beautiful Laundrette Low-budget, high-jinking mix of racism, gay love and Thatcherite ethics in today's Britain. Hanif Kureishi wittily scripts and Stephen Frears warmly directs ironic, tangled tale of South London Pakistani lad and ex-NF boyfriend managing title business for Saeed Jaffrey's superb, rascally rich uncle.

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naturalism; the camera panning round a dim apartment, to come to rest on the Howards in bed, David (Mr Brooks) pestering wife Linda (Ms Hagerty) about their imminent move into a new house. Next day at the ad agency, David blows up a lovely storm on learning he is not to get the expected vice-presidency, is fired for over-reacting ('Oh, by the way, our hairpiece secret is off,' he snarls to his boss, slamming out), and strong-arms his secretly grateful wife into selling all their assets and taking to the road in a mobile home: 'It's time to get out. I want to touch Indians,' he raves. And off they go, with some $145,000, to 'find' themselves.

What follows is beautifully observed, written and acted. First stop is Las Vegas, where David intends a symbolic re-marriage ceremony; their hotel Bridal Suite the night before has twin heartshaped beds (David: 'I think if Liberace had children, this would be their room'); during the night, Linda sneaks down to lose their 'nest-egg' gambling. Among some of the seamlessly inventive set-pieces, David's attempt to persuade the incredulous casino manager (Garry K. Marshall) of the publicity benefits of giving their money back is one for the anthologies. Hoover Dam, next stop, sparks, 'Nice dam, Linda. You want to go first or shall I?' The much-invoked *Easy Rider* gets them off a speeding ticket from a cop who *loves* that movie. Linda talks divorce. In sleepy Safford, Arizona, they get menial jobs. So, back to New York; and humble pie. But no down-beat: humour grows ruefully, scattily out of their plight every mile of the way. As for Penelope Spheeris's **The Boys Next Door**, I loathed it: account of two college kids on a killing spree, masquerading as a timely tract. □

THEATRE 1

High and low

Benedict Nightingale

Love for Love
CONGREVE *Lyttelton*
The Garden of England
ed PETER FOX *Cottesloe*

THE NATIONAL certainly seemed a place of opposites last week. At the Cottesloe the cast, costumed by Woolworths or Oxfam or both, delivered their lines either from the floorboards or from chairs that looked as if they'd been filched from some run-down south London comprehensive. And the austerity was fitting, partly because only a special GLC grant was keeping the theatre open at all, partly because the object of its attentions was a long, gruelling strike. But in the Lyttelton the lights went down on a wonderfully cluttered receiving-room and up on a two-storey townhouse of mellow elegance, surrounded by garden, wall, street, park. And this visual munificence did not seem altogether fitting.

Nor was that just because it left one wondering if a smaller production budget in one theatre might not help keep the other alive for longer. I myself take a less puritan line on this than some of my colleagues, feeling that the National should strive always to avoid compromising its standards and that with certain plays, Restoration comedies maybe included, standards depend partly on the quality of the scenery. It was more because the cost of all that loving detail turned out to be the excellence of the production.

Let me explain. If the RSC's mastery of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods is unmatched, the National has no rival when it comes to staging late-17th- and 18th-century comedy. Again and again it has shown the faces behind the fans, the minds behind the faces, the hearts behind the minds; and realism of performance has been reinforced by a realism of setting that has approached the documentary. Think of Michael Hordern crustily ingesting his breakfast egg against the background of Bath's crescents and squares in *The Rivals*, and you've the general idea in vivid miniature. Indeed, that's an especially good example, because the director was Peter Wood, the man now responsible for **Love for Love**.

Congreve was never going to be as amenable to this sort of approach as Sheridan, relying as he does more on verbal dazzle, less on

BILLBOARD

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
01 628 8795/638 8891 24hr info 628 2295
BARBICAN THEATRE from 12 December **AS YOU LIKE IT.**
THE PIT from 11 December **MELONS** a new play by Bernard Pomerance – author of The Elephant Man. Set in New Mexico at the turn of the centry 'Melons' portrays the dramatic meeting between two old adversaries from the Apache wars. Cast: David Burke, John Cater, Susan Colverd, Ben Kingsley, Anton Lesser. Director: Alison Sutcliffe

BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 9629 Until 23 Nov 7.30pm Mon-Sat **JOEL HALL DANCERS** from Chicago. *'Jazz dance at its best'* Dance Magazine.
27 Nov 7.30pm St Pancras Parish Church **ORCHESTRA OF ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE.**

NATIONAL THEATRE 01 928 2252 Olivier (open stage) 'Yoniadab'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'The Duchess of Malfi', 'Mrs Warren's Profession', 'Love for Love'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'The Garden of England'. Five play Bill. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

HALF MOON THEATRE 213 Mile End Rd. 01 790 4000. **RA-RA ZOO** – an exciting blend of circus and Theatre eves 8pm. Ends 7 Dec.

SHAW SOCIETY Fri, 29 Nov. Two plays by Donald Sutherland – **'OLD MAN'** and **'A FRESH START'** (*after Beckett*) at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Coffee 6.30pm. Performance 7pm

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENTS
A Camden Service
"We created man in his own image"

Michelene Wandor reads her poems
'Gardens of Eden' — *dialogues between Eve and Lilith*
— with special guest poet **Norman Willis**
Sun 24 Nov 8 pm
The Drill Hall Arts Centre
16 Chenies Street, WC1 (Goodge Street tube)
Tickets: £3 (£1.50 concessions) from
Camden Box Office, Shaw Theatre/St Pancras Library, 100 Euston Road, NW1.
Tel: **01-388 1394** (credit cards: **01-387 6293**)
and from The Drill Hall, tel: **01-637 8270.**

NATIONAL SOUND ARCHIVE AUTUMN EVENTS

Tuesday November 26: **The Art of Thomas Tallis**
Peter Phillips, conductor of the **Tallis Scholars,** examines the variety of styles and difficultues in performing the repertoire.

Tuesday December 3: **Mainstream to Dub:**
West Indian Poetry in the Caribbean and in Britain. James Berry highlights distinctive aspects of writers from Eddie Brathwaite to Benjamin Zephaniah and looks at the traditions that influence them.

Thursday December 12: **Jelly Roll Morton:**
Charles Fox, critic and broadcaster, reviews Morton's career and his merits as a composer, pianist and band leader. With new insights and illustrations drawing from recent research in New Orleans.

There will be time for discussion after each talk.

Venue: Novello House, 160 Wardour Street, London W1 at 7.30 pm
Tickets: £2/£1 concessions ***(includes free glass of wine).***
Phone: 01-589 6603 for details and bookings.

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plausibility of character. But that's no reason not to try; and Wood is unquestionably a trier. He and his cast prove as much with touch after touch designed to emphasise that the play's world is a real one, not simply a sleek bubble dancing with highly coloured reflections. There's visibly a working class, which adjusts the master's wig, hangs his carpet over the wall to dry, even sweeps his chimney. There are occasions when the concerns of their betters — to secure sex or property or both at once — seem as serious as careful, measured acting can make them.

Yet overall it doesn't work. Partly that's because Wood sometimes loses his nerve and allows his cast to fall into inconsistencies of style. Niall Buggy plays Scandal, not as the busybodying voyeur his name suggests but as a grave and seigneurial moralist, a salon philosopher capable of holding his own in more solemn surroundings; meanwhile Neil Daglish and Sally Dexter opt unabashedly for caricature, converting a blunt tar and a naive country girl into two bumpkins from Mummerset. But partly, I think, the problem is that the detail comes to seem over-deliberate and realism itself begins to look like affectation. One doesn't believe that the elaborate townhouse is lived in. One feels it's an expensive way of signalling what good, consistent performances should be showing, the authenticity of Congreve's observation. One feels that the National's reclamation of Restoration comedy from formula has itself become formula.

Certainly, one feels that Wood's preoccupation with surface truths has prevented him investigating deeper ones, as well as depriving the play of much of its comic energy. Tim Curry, his big rubbery grins exuding smug glee, admittedly has his moments as the opportunist Tattle; but only one performer manages to be thoroughly human and thoroughly funny, and that's Michael Bryant, playing Sir Samson Legend, braggart, lecher and tyrannical father. There's a bland, smiling brutality about him, a self-satisfied insensitivity to the feelings of his sons, rising to a grim relish when it comes to punishing them for what is (he makes you realise) the sin of being younger than himself: a sort not exactly unknown today.

Meanwhile, Peter Gill's season of new work at the Cottesloe — whose main achievement to date has been putting Debbie Horsfield on our mental maps — comes to an appropriately stark, to-the-point end with the ironically-titled **Garden of England**. The Kent miners and miners' wives who gave interviews to the company during and after last year's strike will surely be gratified by its passionate determination to ensure their points of view get a hearing now, and the rest of us would do well to listen to their sympathetically edited words. It was the worst of times: hatred within the community, violence, defeat, prison for some. It was the best of times: camaraderie, a brave cause to fight, and an awakening for the politically snoozy, the sort who unthinkingly trusted the police and perhaps even voted for someone they now call 'that criminal, that *bad* woman'. 'A great thing for the future,' summed up one such; and so, for her and her neighbours, it may paradoxically turn out to be. □

THEATRE 2

Time and D. H. L.

Paul Allen

Lessons and Lovers
OLWEN WYMARK *Theatre Royal, York*

THE LESSONS are almost as complex as the lovers in Olwen Wymark's play about D. H. Lawrence in his centenary year. It is set in New Mexico: here, in the present, an American professor brings students on a trip committed to the discovery of 'new material'; here, in the Twenties, Lawrence baited, lived off, hurt and occasionally exhilarated not only Frieda but his less spirited admirers, Mabel Dodge Luhan and Dorothy Brett.

The tension between the two stories is used in a variety of ways in a play that is characteristically cool and intellectual without shedding any of the author's customary compassionate sensitivity. Sometimes the way in which the students find subjects for theses in Lawrence's behaviour are simply an ironic counterpoint to the vastly more complicated reality of human relationships. Sometimes the contemporary story is a device for distancing us from episodes in a life already too-familiar.

The inter-cutting of episodes across the 60-year gap occasionally makes the play harder to watch, but patience is handsomely rewarded as we realise the extent to which Lawrence manages to haunt and unsettle those who seek him out. Physically this is expressed as a student hearing the sound of horse's hooves as Frieda gallops home to the ranch 60 years earlier or Lawrence — eager to make some combative point — seizing a chair which the Professor is sitting in. It is when Olwen Wymark suddenly pushes beyond the rational that the play takes wing, and towards the end of the first act she brings off a moment as disturbing as even her subject might have wished for.

The Theatre Royal has a large stage on which this literary play sometimes looks a little static and bloodless in Andrew Mackinnon's production; it would be better suited to a more intimate environment, not least because Benny Young's Lawrence is the kind of figure who would make you feel uncomfortable in your own home but could be safely ignored at a decent distance.

He is angular, awkward and intense; he is contradictory; for a man who has attracted the crass label 'Priest of Love' he spends a great deal of time causing and creating pain; he postures, like Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Yet he works remorselessly and puritanically, at his writing or completing domestic chores. And what does he provide for these women, that after his death they are still fighting over his remains and the possibilities of a shrine? I don't believe Olwen Wymark could begin to confront all the challenges thrown up by him in a single evening. What we have is a portrait that pulls back from judgment of a man who conducted his loves and lessons through quarrels. □

'Dear old member'

Andrew Lumsden

'SO HOW was it?' they all enquired eagerly when I got back to London, and then rebuked me as a boring old queen when I said 'men frightful and décor worse'. Well, I said defensively, I'm not excluding myself: have you ever *looked* at 200 or so middle-aged men in DJs, serried row upon row in a hall, no woman to relieve the visual tedium, no-one under 40?

Of course in some ways it was a revelation. The mystery of why so many middle-aged men find male homosexuality inconceivable is instantly explained if you find yourself doing what all those striving upwardly mobile businessmen are forever doing with their conferences and their stag clubs: sitting with and being numbered among a pasty gathering of entirely white men on whom the agues and cloud covers of England have wreaked devastating havoc.

For the first time in years I entirely failed myself to understand how male homosexuality can be possible, and almost stood up, like someone at a Billy Graham rally, to wave my hands in the air and yodel 'I have seen the light! Lordy I have been saved!' But then it occurred to me, as it seems never to occur to the evangelists, that any such dispensation of grace would add the burden of my attentions to a female population already groaning under an intolerable weight of deteriorating men.

We were at Corpus, Cambridge. It was just such a do as Richard Boston recently wrote about in the *Guardian*, a reunion, only his was at one of the newer foundations, Kings. Ours, reuniting this September the classes of 1958-60, was at the far more ancient Corpus Christi college, which Joseph of Arimathea, or possibly King Solomon, or Noah, founded before the invention of writing; before, at any rate, the invention of structuralism. Marlowe ('...sometime a lovely boy...') is an alumnus, one of the gilt-framed Elizabethan pin-ups in Corpus hall.

Which brings me to the lavatories. The witty dons of Corpus long ago thought that the best memorial to Shakespeare's fore-runner would be to convert the site of his rooms in the Old Court into a student lav. Which they did. Well, two years ago the 'washroom' *went bisexual.* The Queen in council accepted a humble petition by the college that after three thousand years women be admitted as students, and so the Marlowe Memorial Loo bifurcated, and is now a comfort station for all.

Too late, though, to rescue the appalling all-male vista of this September's gaudy. A curiosity of the Master's invitation two months before was explained as I looked about me. Very rudely, as I thought, he had addressed me throughout, though now virtually a stranger, as *old member.* As I wrote indignantly to Alison, because she lives in Cambridge and knows their ways, I suppose I ought to be grateful that he

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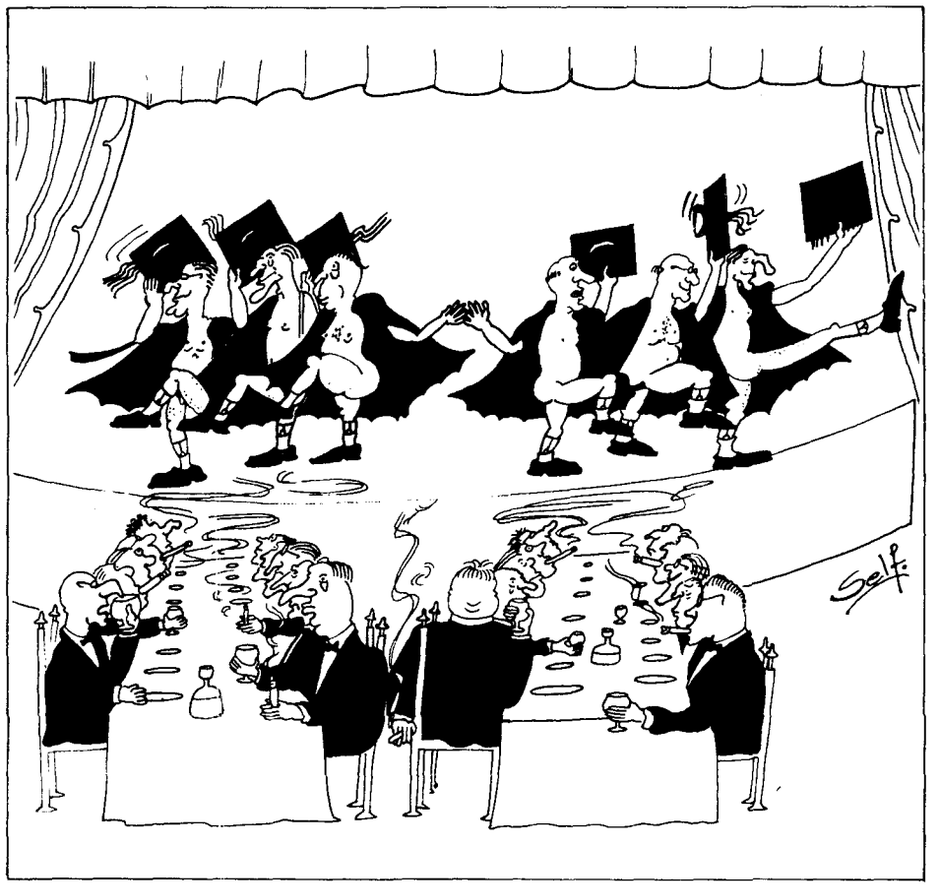

retained some tatters of Latin dignity and couldn't quite bring himself to call me old cock.

It was a smashing hot clear-skied summery weekend, the 28-29 September. Meteorologists will confirm. Anthony, now so distinguished that we had to shake off the press to get out of London, drove through the blaze with me towards the fens and re-endeared himself to me after all these years by looking in perplexity out of the windscreen as we reached Trumpington St and asking 'which of these colleges was ours?' Robert, Archie, Alan, Chris were there, wived and kiddied all, and — exceptions to all previous assertions — in excellent nick.

Two of those sometime adolescent friends of mine are Fellows themselves these days, one of them of Corpus itself, the other of Christ's, where Milton once had his turn as the loveliest boy of the year. I beamed on Chris and Archie with an entirely kindly eye, even though they had let me down. The invitation plainly said that 'only Fellows will wear gowns'. Swallowing my resentment and envy I had waited in the utmost suspense to see whether it was the Dallas or the Di look they favoured. But both of them appeared only to be wearing cloaks cast off by Raleigh after heavy use by Elizabeth I. No concessions to fashion after all.

My eye was kind for they aren't gay. Mean buggers the gay dons of Cambridge. A couple of years ago I was invited to talk about my experiences picking up guardsmen and Tory MPs under Attlee and was told how the then-latest Cambridge gay group had written round all the gay dons they could think of, at all the colleges, asking for a fiver, or even a quid, towards their very small expenses. Not a groat. Not a pierced and shaved or counterfeit farthing from before the recoinage by Edward I was parted with by the fainéant faggots of the fens. Fine examples to youth *they* are.

On the Sunday morning after the gaudy, dressed once more in civvies and skipping matins in college chapel, I went off in the golden sunshine to have lunch beside the Cam with my reunion friends, re-meeting their wives, meeting some of their children. Alison crossed town from her home to join us. Here we are, all of us 'out' according to our different natures, drowsing beside the river on an Alice in Wonderland afternoon, said I to myself. And it beats — indebted though I am to my family for money they denied themselves to send me here — my student years, when I bought the awful propaganda, supposed myself straight, and though not unhappy, was always oddly, inexplicably, lonely...

Bertrand Russell, I would shyly like to inform you, sent me a message when I was 17. My proud father had met him: 'Tell your boy,' said Russell, 'that his years at Cambridge will be the happiest of his life.' I have been very fortunate. They weren't. □

Among this week's contributors:

Justin Wintle is the author of two novels, editor of *The Makers of Modern Culture* and *The Makers of Nineteenth Century Culture* and series editor of the Paladin Movements and Ideas.

Liz Heron edited *Truth, Dare or Promise,* published earlier this year by Virago.

Paul Allen regularly presents Radio 4's *Kaleidoscope.*

Note: the distributors point out that *A Woman to Blame,* mentioned in last week's Footnotes, is readily available in bookshops here.

Naseem Khan

Raised voices

IT'S DARK and warm and murky in the North London pub, a stone's throw from the Angel. The place is crowded out with women (and only women): round the tables, at the bar in little encampments on the floor so you have to pick your way with care as you look for a corner in which to sit and hear the band. For all that, these is a companionable carefree air about it, as if it is one large communal picnic.

It's a fitting atmosphere in which to hear Ova, since that particular sense of female strength and sharing is what their lyrics and their work are all about. For a start, there is no side to Ova, no special sparkly stage clothes or super glossy dazzle. They're two women, pretty ordinary-looking nice-looking women, who give the impression of being lovers certainly, but even more important of being very good and loving friends. Their music is bold and energetic (no accident they call their recording label 'Stroppy Cow'), drawing on a variety of sources (African, rock, South American) and instruments from routine acoustic guitars and soprano sax to kalimba, log drum and tin whistle. The percussion is handled mainly by Rosemary Schonfeld, a tall, brown-haired, bird-like Canadian, while the major instrument of Jana Runnalls (crop-headed and stockier, with a puckish sense of humour) is her voice. Jana trained as a classical singer for seven years (while Rosemary's background is in rock); the texture she can draw from her voice — from bird-like sounds to longdrawn out deep notes (a bit like Indian Dhrupad singing) is extraordinary.

It is not the virtuosity that is impressive however. (In principle they are against anything that makes music-making seem an art to be indulged in only by the professional few.) It is, rather, the simplicity and honesty. The songs talk of female experience — not the masochistic sadness that dogs the usual songs of love and loss and longing, but a celebration of warmth for instance in 'Travelling Spirit', of an open eroticism in 'Far Beyond the Dawn', of a spirit (with its cheerful refrain 'Some little girls say "No!"') in 'Little Girls' and of no little anger in 'Self Defence'. They change, moving from the excitement of top drive to something that is essentially meditative in 'Tidal Dream' carrying the audience completely with them. It is a bountiful performance that offers the assembled audience a view of womanhood that maybe not all subscribed to but one that cannot fail to impress with its generosity, honesty and skill.

Women's music is still much in its infancy

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their eyebrows at the thought. Surely, they feel, there is a democracy in the arts; consider the array of highly-paid female singers — no oppression, surely, there? Ova would reply by pointing to the way in which female musicians, and singers especially, are treated. The sexual stereotyping is obvious. Add to that however the way in which women's voices are treated technically; drowned by synthesisers, over-produced (listen, said Jana, to Alison Weir's LP). Women's voices, they say, tend to be mixed further back than men's, which takes away the rawness and sense of presence ('I think men shy away from it. They try to conceal it.') The effect is to diminish the impact and package the voice, and there is little that can be done about it. 'Many women are not allowed into the mixing rooms and have no control over the final mix.'

Forming Ova meant taking their technical life into their own hands, and not an easy thing it's proved. Male sound engineers and technicians have been loath to share skills. Firms renting recording equipment regularly messed them up, believing that women didn't really count. However they have fought through the jungle, coming out with the conviction that the technical mystique was no more than that: a blind that suggested more than it concealed. Their recent tape, for instance (a solo by Jana, 'Ancestral Dream'), was recorded in her own flat on a simple 4-track mini-machine, little bigger than an answerphone. The simplicity of recording (not reflected in poor quality) means that the price can be a low £3.50*.

The technical know-how forms part of their well-established music workshops, designed on the one hand to create more women engineers and technicians, on the other to convince women of their own musical potential, either through percussion or voice. Their popularity and success has been great, often against women's own expectations. For though it's rare, said Jana, to find a woman who really cannot sing, it is all too usual to find women who believe they can't, and are conscious of being constricted. 'Women as a people have been silenced so long.' But 'the magic of singing together in a women-only environment is difficult to describe because it is such an emotional one.'

It may be difficult to describe, but that sense of expansion at the heart of Ova's aims was very obvious during their North London gig. It is something that points up, by contrast, the narrow ground allotted to women in the music industry: a narrow ground that has not a little to do with the past.

Eva Rieger's telling essay on women's role in music in *Feminist Aesthetics* (ed. Gisela Ecker, The Women's Press £9.95 & £4.95) lays the background. It is not a bright one. Excluded from the great church music of the middle ages, enjoined to treat music as 'an ornament', effectively barred till this century from orchestral work, it is a sad history of restriction.

Ova, with their refusal to accept their proper place — a refusal to be hamstrung with technical paraphernalia and roadies *et al*, refusal to write conformist lyrics or live conformist lives — is a blow back, at last. □

* *available from Ova, Unit C8, Metropolitan Workshops, Enfield Road, London N1 (01-241 2761).*

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Reign of chaos

THE MOST MEMORABLE image to appear on television for a long time was that of Hermine Demoriane walking along a loaded clothesline singing *'Non je ne regrette rien'* as *au pair* girl 'Chaos' in Derek Jarman's otherwise earthbound punk apocalypse **Jubilee** (C4). Hermine turned up elsewhere last week leading a 12-foot seemingly live dinosaur along a catwalk at Olympia in **The Alternative Miss World** (C4) then shooting it dead. And Jarman appeared on **Saturday Review** (BBC2) likening his eight-year struggle to make the life of Caravaggio to the trouble Caravaggio had had with it himself, although the painter had only had the Holy Roman Empire to cope with where Jarman had had the British Film Industry.

What British Film Year? asked Jarman. Our films were American, made exclusively for the American market. Everyone knew this except the producers who worked blindly in money. If Fassbinder had had to face the same lack of vision among German producers he'd still be making super-eights at the Film Co-Op. Jarman laughed at his fate and an exhausted-looking Caravaggio rolled his eyes and fell back on his couch in sympathy. One couldn't help remembering *Gandhi's Chariot to India* and other recent American Express Cards: what will do nicely today may not be of much interest tomorrow?

Over-sanguine British pragmatism was in ferocious evidence in Nigel Williams's unfortunate attempt to interview Jean Genet on **Arena** (BBC2), with Williams as the Corporation's usual representative of its supposed public's ignorance of the matter in hand. Ignorance, it seems, was not considered enough on this occasion. Genet had to put up with the traditional inadequate French. What a sad frustration of a great writer's one-off willingness to open up in public. Embarrassment no substitute for elementary good manners, etc. etc.

Richard Denton's 12-film **Comrades** (BBC2), PRed as 'not quite the usual grey monotony of leader's speeches, tractor-factory production figures and anti-Western propaganda', kicked off with something not far removed from that in the pristine person of Rita Tikhovnova. This almost unbelievably right-minded Miss Normal must lead a strikingly idiosyncratic private life in that glimpsed bed-sittingroom of her parents' two-roomed Moscow flat to sustain such a convincing public cleanliness. With her equally Pasteurised boyfriend, who 'designs sets for the Moscow Children's Theatre' of all nice things to do, she visits 'Inter-Club', the international friendly society (by invitation only; even with a film crew it's hard to get in) where the evening's temptation is a talk on international management problems. Russian high-ups frown on pop of course, and quite rightly, but after the rigours of Inter-Club there is sometimes an opportunity for well-behaved and deserving survivors to indulge a taste for 'mischievous music', as it is called, in what looked like a village-hall disco for under-twelves. 'I am a mischievous Moscow playboy, drunk with power and sex and drugs' mimed somebody to the six licensed deservees, who would certainly have joined him immediately if they'd had any sense.

Rita and Nikita are engaged though. 'Of course the woman should look after the home,' thought Rita. 'Not physically, by doing everything, but by creating a kind of atmosphere and by doing certain things which will dispel her husband's bad moods . . .' Well, I whole-heartedly endorse this sort of attitude, but I wonder what Chaos from *Jubilee* would have to say on the subject. 'It is right that all teachers should be women,' said Rita. 'They have advantages of tact, tenderness and concern.' But though it is true that these are indeed a woman's prime characteristics, one had one's doubts about this trainee teacher's professed tenderness: 'The Western approach to literature is that Social Realism does not exist, that it is a fiction. But we have our philosophy of Scientific Communism . . .' When honours student Rita is accepted for a teacher, Mum and Dad prepare the food for her celebration, then go out: 'Small Moscow flats have special rules.' Next morning Mum is up at six performing womanly duties at the cooker. 'I am very superstitious,' admits Rita, revealing a first glimpse of her true nature. 'I collect lucky omens and tickets, then I eat them.' It seemed the only sensible thing to do under the circumstances.

Russia today is like England in the late Fifties — post-rationing, but pre-pill. vaguely aware of being part of some unattainable Utopia, but uncertain whether to stop wearing a hat or not. At the beginning of the interesting last edition of **Now the War is Over** (BBC2) it is the last few months of Labour's working majority and people are growing tired of austerity: 'Labour had tackled the sins of the past, but the future belonged to the Conservatives.' 'You didn't want to be called a Socialist, you wanted to be Labour,' said a party worker referring to the Tory trick of comparing Socialism with Communism and hence the Cold War. Labour's days were numbered. Her last gasp was the Festival of Britain, 'dedicated to a naive ideal that Britain could do better', as Festival regular Hugh Casson expressed it. 'As you walked in you saw yourself on television,' thrilled someone seeing the Box for the first time. Noel Coward was less optimistic: 'There are bad times just around the corner/and the outlook is absolutely vile.'

With eight million visitors, the Festival was a hit, but the last year of Labour was full of crises and a new-look Conservative Party with 'less posh candidates' promising to 'set the people free' was waiting in the wings. General uncertainty about the future was reflected in the uneven distribution of hats among festival-goers. It seems to have been sometime between the '52 elections and the Korean War that we finally all bared our heads in readiness for the good times that were to be our last, although Churchill appeared in a Churchwarden following his 1952 victory. □

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Weekend competition

No 2900 Set by Ken Rudge

Ella Fitzgerald has told us why the Lady is a Tramp — she won't go to crap games with barons and oils, for instance, non-conformity that hinders a Fifth Avenue lady's acceptability. Give us a version which tells what would make other folk *de trop* in the National Front, WVS, Militant, Sloane Rangers or whatever. Max. 12 lines, by 5 December.

No 2897 Set by Julian Rathbone

Satisfactorily unsuitable presents for the famous.

Report By Babe Bio

I have been kwite shokked by the tidle wave of bad taist fludding into our offis. I can just see you out their, maskeradeing as respektabul sitizens, teechers and soshul workers and thinges, and orl the time you are ful of envie, hate-red, malis and orl uncharitabulness. Wat is moor, you have a proerient obseshun with burth control and the lyke — I even began to fele kwite sorry for Mr Parkinson — and a common malishus plesure in wishing mirers on unatractive peepul. Some of the beter eyedeas we get to use for free becos lots of you thort of them (we can't aford to throe muny away on multipul prizes given the pitanse they pay us): a Sony Walkman for Van Gogh, for instanse, or leg-warmers, binoculers, etc., for other pore handicaped peepul; a pair of wellies for Napoleon; bathrume lukshuries for Marat; theater tikets for Lincoln; a sub to Greenpiece for Captain Ahab. £3 each for the other pressies I tuk a fancy to (and that didunt inklude any that neded explaning).

A copy of 'Small is Beautiful' for *Wagner.*
An evening with the Two Ronnies for *Queen Victoria.*

ANT-Y-DOT

Two gallons of vinegar and ten sacks of potatoes for *Lot's wife.*

WILL BELLENGER

A soap-on-a-rope for *Pontius Pilate.*
A surprise party for *Greta Garbo.*

NICK HAY

An abacus for *Derek Hatton.*

CHAS F. GARVEY

A crystal ball for *Lenin.*
A claw hammer for *Jesus.*

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Pot noodles for *Bernard Levin.*

CYNTHIA HALL

An eternity ring for *Sarah Keays.*
A pair of water-wings for *Edward Kennedy.*

MARK AMBROSE

A 1967 £1 note for *Lord Wilson of Rievaulx.*

ROB HULL

A bottle of invisible ink for *Jeffrey Archer.*

V. ERNEST COX

A bottle of aftershave for *King Charles I.*

CATHERINE BENSON

A rucksack for *Richard III.*

ROGER E. BRYAN

Life membership of Cruffs for *Jezebel.*
A book token for *Josef Goebels.*

W. S. BROWNLIE

The offer of a place on a teacher-training course for *Sir Keith Joseph.*

S. H. G. HEAD

A trampoline for *Michelangelo.*

KEITH BAIN

A book of crosswords for *Jesus.*
A packet of gobstoppers for *Jeffrey Archer.*
A year's sabbatical for *Noel Petty.*

GERARD BENSON

A bottle of Pyms for *Margaret Thatcher.*

LAURA JACOBS

A Pontings gift token for *Michael Heseltine.*

JOYCE JOHNSON

A framed copy of 'If' for *Charles I.*

FRANK PURCELL

The 'Observer's Guide to Birds' for *Prometheus.*
A packet of crumpets for *St Lawrence.*
His own complete recordings for *Beethoven.*

CHRISTOPHER GORDON

A season ticket to Celtic for *Ian Paisley.*

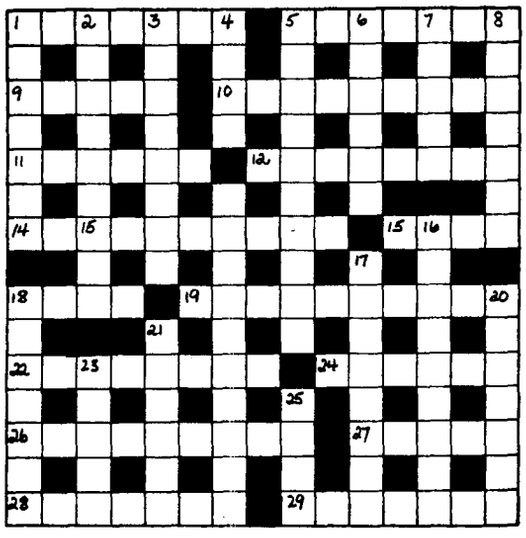
D. E. POOLE

A wooden tool box for *Abelard.*

M. E. AULT

Weekend Crossword 1500

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1500, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 10 December.



Name_____

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ACROSS

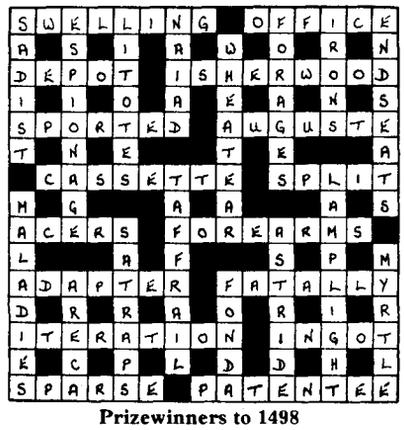
1. Old cricketer who provides publicity for the railways? (7)
5. Assumed one is among those transferred? (7)
9. Instruments for keeping books all around one (5)
10. Doctor with the sound care of children (9)
11. I prune freely when they are not ready for picking (6)
12. Knight who makes one count up foreign arms (8)
14. The capital would not be locked up if change were missing (10)
15. The bird needs a pound to supply proofs of innocence (4)
18. It provides transport for a penniless vagrant (4)
19. Ripe tastes evolve a revealing exhibition (10)
22. One who intercedes made riot go out of control (8)
24. Child given a game, but it is certainly not free (6)
26. Mate wickedly felled in front of ship (9)
27. Shrub used for planting or setting out in tubs (5)
28. Crosser when adult (7)
29. They enable one to look out for fighters among men of action (7)

DOWN

1. Camp out in a scrapped Oxford University Boat Club four (7)
2. Secrets which may make the artillery company happy (9)
3. Ill-used young lady in confinement (8)
4. District without any ego? (4)
5. Praise site developed for shop (10)
6. Garland made by dam and mother (6)
7. The place for one who makes an effort (5)
8. Takes in a different set in lodgings (7)
13. Not eat one's hat as a cricketer (4,6)
16. Where there is a garment in the branches (9)
17. The journalist is one who makes changes to a street (8)
18. Story about a fairy queen being reduced to a domestic situation (7)
20. The sovereign would discover the way out if the politician were replaced with gravity (7)
21. A girl embraces a number in the open (6)
23. Trick to avoid (5)
25. Indebted to being married with a ring (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1498



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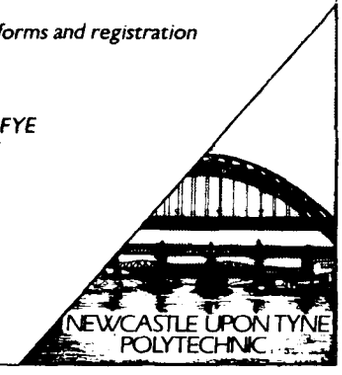

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TUES 26 NOV

SUPPORT MAIRE O'SHEA and protest against 'Prevention of Terrorism' Act. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1. 7.30 p.m. With Dr O'Shea, Clare Short MP, Geoff Bell, Jeremy Corbyn MP. Organised by Socialist Society, 01 734 8501. Admission 50p.

TUES 26 NOV — WED 27 NOV

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FRI 29 NOV

Groupe Socialiste Francaise de Grande-Bretagne. Reunion avec Stuart Holland, depute travailliste, sur le theme: 'Le defi de l'Europe – perspectives pour la gauche'. 19h30, Friends Meeting House (salle 16), Euston Road, Londres NW1 (en face de la gare de Euston).

SAT 30 NOV

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SAT 30 NOV

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY and the New Cold War 2-6pm Queen Elizabeth College, Campden Hill Road, W8. Star Wars, Nuclear Winter, Third World. Details BSSRS 01-607 9615.

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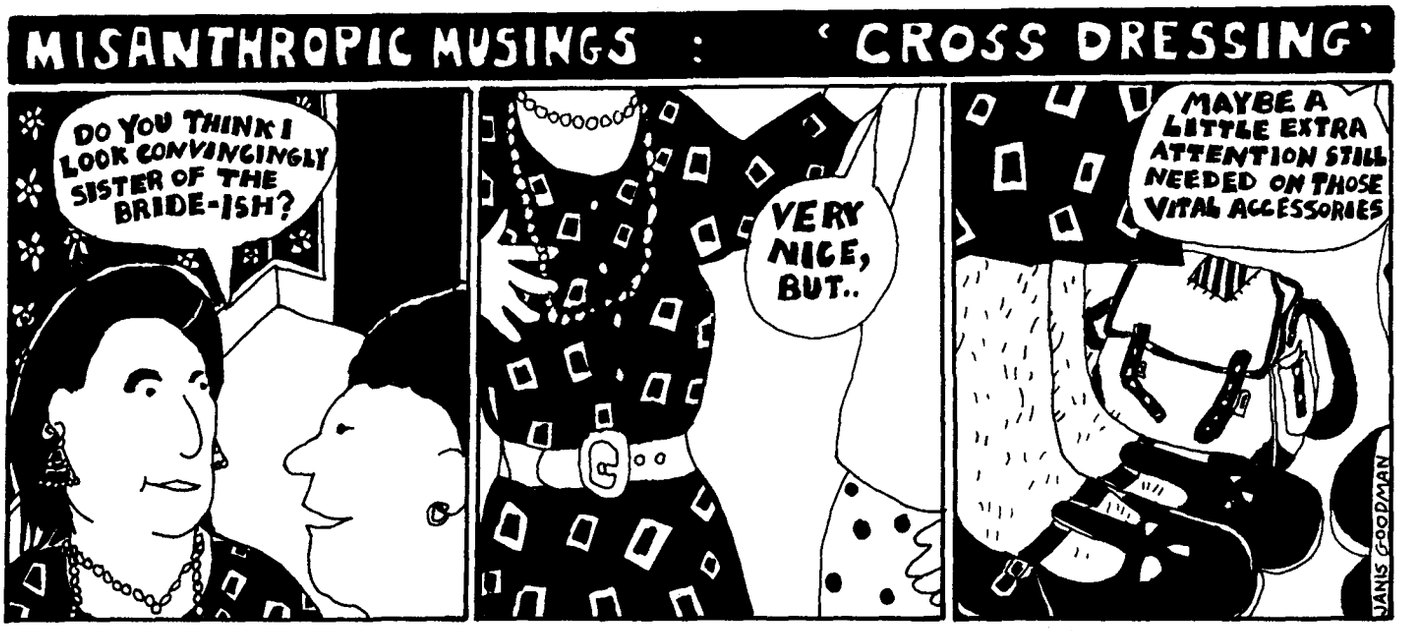
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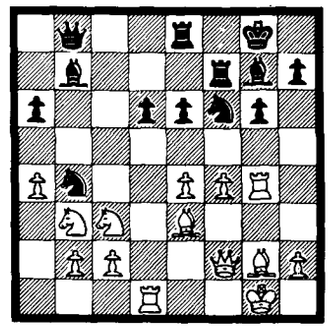
CHESS

GAMES 22 and 24 from the Karpov-Kasparov match provide a remarkable contrast in approach to the problem of how to play for a win with White. Karpov was two games behind before game 22 and so had to win twice in order to stay champion. He started to tackle the deficit thus:

Karpov-Kasparov, Game 22, Moscow, 5th November 1985. QGD. 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Be7 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Bf4 Nf6 6. e3 In game 20 Kasparov equalised against 6. Qc2 with 6...0-0 7. e3 c5 8. dxc5 Bxc5 9. Nf3 Nc6 10. Be2 d4. **0-0 7. Nf3 Bf5 8. h3 c6 9. g4 Bg6** A controversial decision. White now gets the two Bs, Black the less useful two g-pawns. On the other hand, 9...Be6 concedes control of an important diagonal after 10. Bd3. **10. Ne5 Nfd7 11. Nxg6 fxg6 12. Bg2 Nb6 13. 0-0 Kh8 14. Ne2 g5?!** It is hard to understand this voluntary weakening of the light squares. Karpov now has a clear objective: to conquer the square f5. **15. Bg3 Bd6 16. Qd3 Na6 17. b3 Qe7 18. Bxd6 Qxd6 19. f4!?** A bold decision. In such positions White could easily come to grief down the e-file. **gxf4 20. exf4 Rae8 21. f5 Nc7 22. Rf2 Nd7 23. g5!** White's spatial advantage becomes menacing. **Qe7 24. h4 Qe3 25. Rd1 Nb5 26. Qxe3 Rxe3 27. Kh2 Nb6 28. Ng3 Nc8 29. Nf1 Re7** The position seems double-edged. Black has counter-play through pressure on d4 and f5 combined with the idea of occupying e4. Karpov finds a brilliant solution in a temporary sacrifice of the d4 pawn. **30. Rd3 Ncd6 31. Ng3 Ne4 32. Bxe4! dxe4 33. Re3 Nxd4 34. Kh3 Re5 35. Kg4 h5+** A panicky reaction that only speeds the end, but what else? Perhaps Kasparov should have tried 34...a5, intending ...a4. **36. Kxh5 Nxf5 37. Rxf5 Rfxf5 38. Nxf5 Rxf5 39. Rxe4 Kh7 40. Re7 b5** 40...Rb5 fails to 41. a4. **41. Rxa7 b4 and 1-0** as Kasparov resigned this hopeless ending during the adjournment.

This game was vintage, hallmarked Karpov — a spatial clamp, steadily growing pressure, every morsel of positional advantage extracted, no undue forcing. But what can have come over him as he prepared for his next White in the final game? It is as if he had drained some Jekyll-and-Hyde potion that transformed the rational strategist into a bloodthirsty attacker.

Karpov-Kasparov, Game 24, Moscow, 9th November 1985. Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation. 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Be2 e6 7. 0-0 Be7 8. f4 0-0 9. Kh1 Qc7 10. a4 Nc6 11. Be3 Re8 12. Bf3 Rb8 13. Qd2 Bd7 14. Nb3 b6 All so far as in Game 18 where Karpov played 15. Bf2, followed by Bg3, Rael and e4-e5 — without achieving much (drawn in 23 moves). Now he uses a more brutal method. **15. g4 Bc8** Necessary to allow the Nf6 a retreat. Yet the move gives a curious impression that Kasparov is already luring the champion on to his doom. **16. g5 Nd7 17. Qf2 Bf8 18. Bg2 Bb7 19. Rad1 g6 20. Bc1** To clear the way for the transfer Rd1-d3-h3. Unfortunately, when the R reaches h3 it doesn't threaten much. **Rbc8 21. Rd3 Nb4 22. Rh3 Bg7 23. Be3 Re7 24. Kg1 Rce8** Truly mysterious rook manoeuvres! The idea must be to discourage f4-f5, which White needs to engineer to put some weight into the offensive. **25. Rd1 f5!?** In the most important game of his life Kasparov keeps faith with his own genius and dares to sacrifice his b-pawn for active play. **26. gxf6 Nxf6 27. Rg3 Rf7 28. Bxb6 Qb8 29. Be3** Can this really be best? Why not 29. Na5? If then 29...Ba8 30. Nc4 is awkward for Black. 29...Nh5 30. Rf3 Ba8 31. Nc4 also seems much more promising for Karpov than the way the game goes. **Nh5 30. Rg4 Nf6** A



normal result now would be 31. Rg3 Nh5 32. Rg4 — draw. But Karpov is committed to glory or bust. **31. Rh4 g5! 32. fxg5 Ng4 33. Qd2 Nxe3 34. Qxe3 Nxc2 35. Qb6 Ba8! 36. Rxd6 Rb7** Bust! Karpov's last stand ends in a massacre. **37. Qxa6 Rxb3 38. Rxe6 Rxb2 39. Qc4 Kh8 40. e5 Qa7+ 41. Kh1 Bxg2+ 42. Kxg2 Nd4+ 0-1.**

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2) Where did Billy Connolly join Catherine Cookson, Lord Lichfield, Claire Rayner and Denis Healey last week?
3) What were Jo Robins, Heather Swailes and Lindy Williams elected to chair last week?
4) What was Paul Jones elected to chair last week?
5) Which of Margaret Thatcher's ministers resigned last week?
6) Which of Margaret Thatcher's ministers admitted last week that he had inadvertently 'leaked' information about a takeover bid?
7) Who said last week 'I have lived in the US for five years and this time has been hell'?
8) Who said last week 'I don't hate all Americans. I met one good one'?
9) Who wrote the book *A Time For Peace*, published in the US last week?
10) Who wrote *The Bone People*, which won the Booker Prize?

Answers

1) D. H. Lawrence (in Poet's Corner); 2) In adverts for the Freeze campaign; 3) The Green Party; 4) CND; 5) Ian Gow; 6) George Younger; 7) Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh; 8) Vitaly Yurchenko; 9) Mikhail Gorbachev; 10) Keri Hulme

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